NEW LEARNING IN OLD EGYPT

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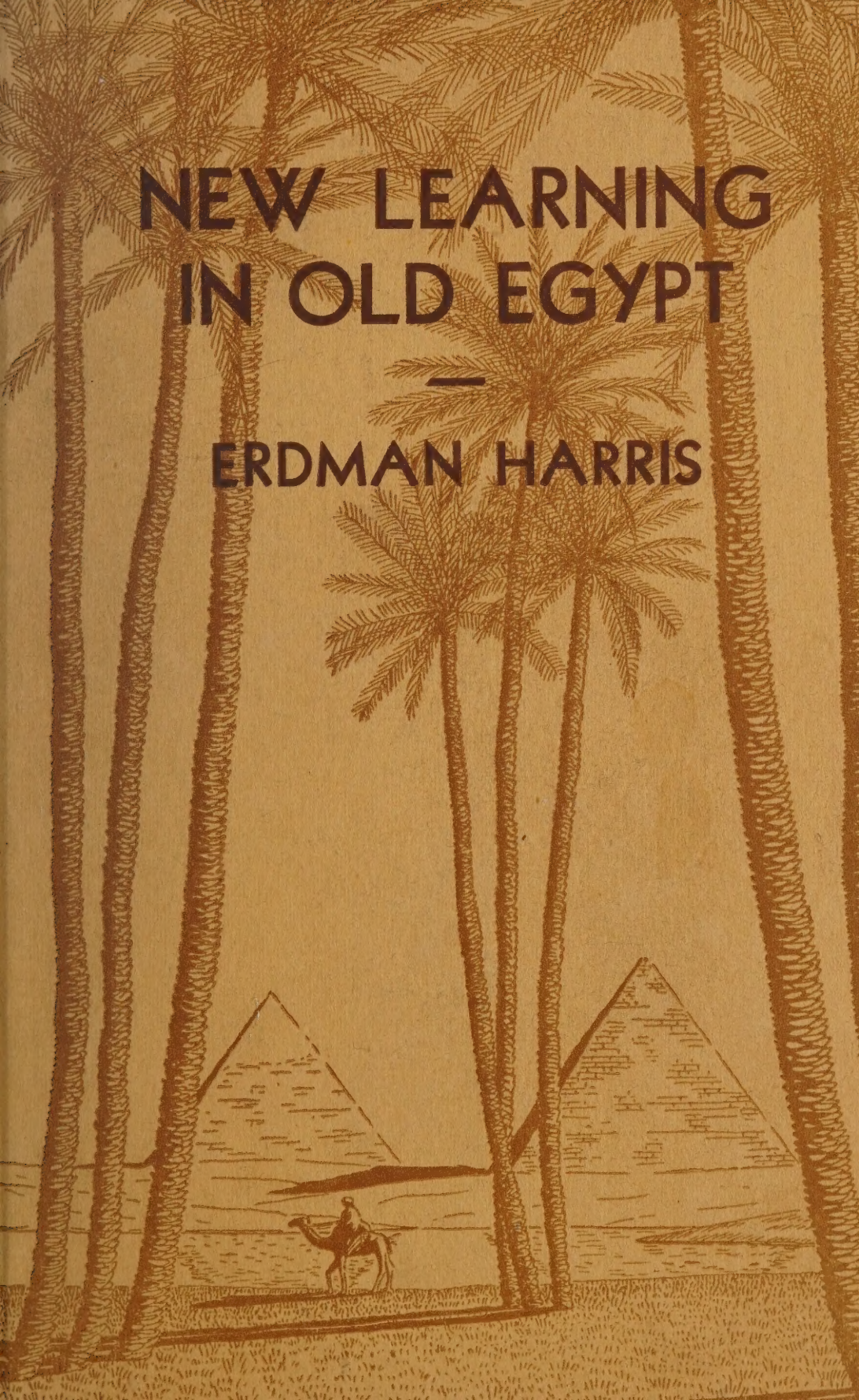
ERDMAN HARRIS



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By

ERDMAN HARRIS

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DEDICATED

To My Former Colleagues

IN CAIRO

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NEW LEARNING IN OLD EGYPT

I: AN INTRODUCTION TO EGYPT

If you come to Egypt by the Sitmar Line from Italy, your first glimpse of the country is apt to be through a porthole, early in the morning. A flaming sail, emblazoned by the sun, commandeers the foreground. There is a blue sky, luminous as rhinestone, above; an Oriental port city beyond. You have reached Alexandria.

Hastily you throw on some thin clothes and emerge on deck. Your heart is bound to beat faster. The ship is being warped in to the dock. The dock is crowded with gesticulating natives. There are *effendis* in European clothes and red fezzes; there are *fellaheen* in long white (or near white) *galabiyas;* there are porters in blue or khaki tunics and small round caps, with metal number-plates strapped to their arms. There are the representatives of Cairo and Alexandria hotels in white crash suits, and gold-lettered hats. They try to get you to engage them for baggage-handling before the gangplank is lowered.

Beyond the first flat stretch of dock the Customs House looms—and looms with such "frightful mien" that you

are ready to fall into the arms of the first "Cook's" or "American Express" representative, and beg for his services of supervision, no matter how much it costs. When the process is over, when you are sitting comfortably in your train just beyond the Customs House, with your baggage safely tucked away under the seats and in the racks, then you wonder why you tipped the fellow three dollars. You will know better next time!

The train starts. The babel-like confusion of the docks is left behind. The trim black and white ship disappears behind a row of warehouses. You are on your way to Cairo. But you have just ahead three hours of train travel through the heart of the real Egypt.

Let us imagine that you are, as I was, under appointment as a teacher in the American University at Cairo. This will condition your view of the landscape; it will modify your reactions to what you see. You have said to yourself over and over again, "I am going to work *with* Egyptians in helping them to solve their *real* difficulties. I am not arriving with a trunkful of doctrines or practices I am bent on 'slipping over on' them or selling to them." In other words, you have imbibed the spirit of modern education. As you get your introduction to the scenery of the country on that hot September day of your arrival, you will keep your eyes and ears open, your mind alert, your sympathies sensitive to detect what a foreigner can do in an Oriental land to help Orientals face their problems squarely.

Egypt is *practically* much smaller than it looks on the map, for most of it is desert, uninhabited and, until exten-

sive irrigation is undertaken, uninhabitable. One can profitably think about its populated area as a vast polywog, the head being that part of the country bordering on the Mediterranean Sea, the tail being the fringes of green following the banks of the Nile down into the Sudan, a verdant tail about five miles wide, through the inhospitable waste of the *Sahara* (the Arabic word for desert). Alexandria stands at the extreme northwest corner of the polywog's head, Port Said at the northeast corner. Cairo completes the triangle, being located just about at the place where the head leaves off and the tail begins. The Nile, welling up in the heart of Africa and Abyssinia, its two streams blending to form one as it passes *down north* through the desert, finally finds itself able to spread out as a fertilizing, fructifying stream. This spreading-out takes place at Cairo, where the river is split by an island, joins together again, shortly afterwards tumbling over a big dam and then branching out to irrigate the entire Delta. There are approximately 12,000 square miles of fertile land in the country. There are about 14,500,000 people. This means about 1200 individuals to every square mile, making Egypt the most densely populated portion of the globe.

In America we are accustomed to looking out of train windows and seeing miles upon miles of uninhabited country, the lush wildness of which beckons to all who have the zest for tramping or exploration in their blood. In Egypt there is hardly a spot where one can go (except out into the desert) to escape from the sight of the works of man or man himself. The flat country is dotted with

groves of graceful palms. The land in between is cultivated intensively by primitive yet effective methods. Men and women working in the fields, ploughing the ground with wooden implements pulled by water-buffaloes; oxen, blindfold, working a water-wheel by walking in a circle, bearing a yoke attached as a radius to the simple machine in the center; little mud villages, their streets filled with goats, chickens, geese, dogs, children, watched over by the minaret of the local mosque; stately camels, parading along irrigation ditches, half-hidden beneath loads of fuel; these things are hardly ever absent from the Egyptian scene, as one looks out the window of the diner, run by the Compagnie Internationale des Wagons Lits, waited on by the Berberine servants in *tarbouches* (fezzes) and long, white *galabiyas,* with red sashes round the waists to match their hats.

It suddenly will come over you with a rush that you are gazing upon practically the same *type* of village life as existed at the time of the Pharaohs. The cities have changed. Cairo has been built, destroyed, rebuilt, has fallen on ruin, been rebuilt. Alexandria has seen all sorts of phases. An ancient inhabitant returning to earth in 1932 would certainly *not* recognize the towns. But he would recognize the villages. You will gaze out upon the country with mingled feelings. You will be impressed and oppressed by the poverty, the squalor, the filth, the backwardness of the life you see. You will have read of the appalling devastations of preventable diseases. You will probably see men, women, and children suffering from them as the train pauses briefly at a few of the

larger Delta towns. You will have read of the widespread illiteracy. As you sight village after village, town after town, where these conditions repeat themselves, you may well wonder what a foreign university of a few hundred students can do for such a situation.

I prophesied, however, that your feelings would be "mingled." You will have been apprised of the fact that there is very little actual starvation in Egypt; that, on the whole, there is much happiness and contentment; that the climate, though not variable enough or cool enough for the production of the kind of restless vitality cherished in North America, is far better than that of most tropical or sub-tropical countries; that the incessant sunshine has a tendency to check disease and promote health; that most of the evils so glaringly apparent are actually preventable through education; and that the people themselves are, in the main, strong, well-formed, cheerful, witty, kindly, hospitable, and hard-working.

As you gaze from your train-window you will be able to verify many statements picked up from reading and conversation. Occasionally you may glimpse the faces of the village women. (You have been told that you will not see so many of the faces of the Moslem women in the cities because of their veils.) They may be standing gazing up at the train. Some may, with a giggle, or even a sudden look of dismay, grasp the side of their flowing headgear and hold it up as a veil until the train has passed. But on the whole, the intimacy of village life, the necessity for everyone to work, the *camaraderie* of the soil, have destroyed the observance of the rule of the veil for Moslem

women. This permits one to notice their beauty and vitality. The men walk like kings, lords of their domain. They sing or chaff one another as they swing along the roads. As one gets to know them one finds the first impression corroborated and sustained: they are in the main cheerful, contented, of quick comprehension, and ready wit. They are very fond of jokes. They are good at repartee. They are extremely hospitable and courteous.

You will learn later that much of the territory you see is owned by absentee landlords. Even though there are over one million, five hundred thousand individual holdings of ten acres or less, two-thirds of the arable land is the property of one per cent of the people. Some of the landlords never go near their own estates. Their agents do the work of organizing the peasants, selling the produce, and farming the revenue. From the standpoint of its social structure, Egypt represents as much of a pyramidal form as its chief historical monuments.

I have intentionally elaborated on the journey through the Delta in order that the vivid impressions of the capital city of over a million inhabitants will not be given undue importance. For, as a matter of fact, the real Egypt is the Egypt of the village. Not that the cities are negligible, but their culture and life rest on the solid foundation of prosperity laid in the rural communities. A future teacher in an urban college would do well to ponder the implications of this statement.

In the distance, to the west, the Pyramids of Gizeh are now visible above the palm trees—ten miles away or more. The cream-colored rim of the desert trails north-

ward from them along the horizon. Straight ahead the buff battlements of the Mokkattam Hills behind Cairo to the east rise like some great protecting wall. Halfway up, on a sandstone crag, stands the Citadel, with the mosque of Mohammed Ali and its slender minarets forming the most striking landmark in the city itself. Before you know it, the buildings become numerous; you enter the yards, the train glides into the station; another babel ensues!

But let us say that you are met, as we were, by the entire teaching staff of the American University and their families. The president of the university steps forward to welcome you. Your baggage is taken care of. The eager, smiling faces of the American community look extremely good to you. You begin to feel at home immediately. You are escorted out into the president's automobile. Blue-bloused porters pile your baggage in the back. The engine starts. You make the half circle of the station yard, gaze up at the bright biscuit-shade of the Arabic architecture fortunately employed in designing the depot, and swing out into the street with much necessary klaxoning to open a passage in the turbulent sea of people passing across in front of you. As it did for Moses, the sea divides, and you are on your way down Sharia Nubar Pasha.

On the right you pass a beautiful mosque, then the Vacuum Oil Company, then the Young Men's Christian Association. On the left, down the side streets, you catch a glimpse of the outskirts of the poorer sections of town, unhealthy, congested, picturesque, fascinating. These

poorer sections, including the bazaar quarter, known as the *Muski,* made up of conglomerate groups of peasants who have drifted in from the country, Arabs, Sudanese, poor Jews, and many other varieties of folk, are unfortunately breeding-grounds for disease. The president will tell you that of the 58 boys and 55 girls born in Cairo every day on an average, 27 will be dead before a year passes, as compared with 7 in New York City; five years hence, 51 will be gone, though New York will have lost only 11 by comparison; and of the 55 still living at 30 years of age, 80 per cent will be suffering from bilharzia, hookworm, tuberculosis, venereal, or eye diseases; that is, only 11 of the 113 might be considered "not unhealthy."

You will be informed that the average span of life is not over 24 years; though if a child survives his fifth year, the chances are that he will live to be 45. Most Egyptians do no live long enough to become really productive members of the community. Harassed through life by disease and taunted by a vision of early old age, the ordinary inhabitant is more productive than we would imagine, knowing the conditions.

The problem of health is most serious, naturally, in these congested parts of the Cairo slums, where often the sunshine is unable to penetrate because of the narrowness of the streets and the height of the rickety buildings. The situation will strike your sympathies as you ride along, but you will soon have pointed out to you on the right something that will wrench your attention away from such depressing sights and thoughts. You will be abreast of the Shepheard's Hotel.

The site of Shepheard's was the location of the French headquarters at the time of Napoleon's invasion of Egypt. At the northeastern corner of the present hotel building there is a little garden in which General Kléber of Napoleon's army was assassinated. The hotel was built in the middle of the last century and has been the rendezvous for tourists and travellers ever since. At teatime in the afternoon the famous terrace is a veritable mêlée of motion and color. The *dragomans* lurk like beautifully clad vultures on the sidewalks in front of the main entrance, waiting to spring upon some unsuspecting tourist and take him to see the Pyramids, for whatever can be got out of him. Across the street, behind one row of bazaars, is the central building of the American Mission in Egypt.

Your car passes on into Opera Square. Here, on the left, you see the beautiful Ezbekieh Gardens, where shaded walks afford a welcome shelter from the noonday sun. Just beyond the gardens stands the Opera House built especially for the first performance of Verdi's "Aida." On the right is the Continental Hotel, with its terrace, flanked by the offices of the American Express Company. Several famous sidewalk coffeehouses, filled to overflowing with red-tarbouched *effendis,* also look out upon this central *midan* or plaza of the town. West of this square lies the European section of the city, consisting of smart shops, consulates, ministries, apartments, broad streets, restaurants, and *pensions.* East of Opera Square is the *Muski.* South of it, as the automobile still proceeds, after a brief trip through a street lined with native shops, stands the Palace of the King, facing westward on Abdin

Square—a huge, bare, macadamized drill-ground, giving, however, a rather impressive view of the palace.

In this building the King of Egypt lives and works. The president may tell you a little about him. On October 9, 1917, after the death of his brother Sultan Hussein, Fuad succeeded to the Sultanate. He showed considerable courage in accepting the position! The life of a ruler was none too secure in those days. His authority is conditioned somewhat by the power behind the throne, namely, Britain, but he has commended himself to his people in many ways. He was born in Gizeh Palace on March 26, 1868. He is a direct descendant of the founder of the ruling family, Mohammed Ali Pasha, who came to Egypt with the Ottoman army that the Sublime Porte sent to expel the French. Fuad is the youngest son of Ismail Pasha. In 1878, when he was ten years old, he went to Geneva, accompanied by three Egyptian professors, to study for two winters at the Toudikon school. Later he was sent to Italy, where he eventually served for some time as an officer in the Italian Field Artillery. He was considered a better-than-average student at the Royal Academy of Turin. In an Italian military school he had for a companion the present King of Italy. In 1890, he visited his father in Turkey, where he was presented to the Sultan, Abdul Hamid, who appointed him military attaché to the Turkish Embassy in Vienna. He returned to Egypt later and held a rather responsible post for three years. Then he became Sultan, which title he kept during the period of the war. When the declaration of February 28, 1922, was made by England as a result of the recommendations of the Milner Commission, Fuad was pro-

claimed King of Egypt. Since his accession to the throne, he has done a great deal to encourage the development of education in the country. He is a hard worker at the routine jobs of interviewing and consulting. Unfortunately, from an outsider's point of view, he clings with a surprising tenacity to old-fashioned Moslem ideas of the place of woman. He arrives home from his summer at Alexandria each fall on a train that precedes the one in which the Queen rides. He drives from the station to his magnificent Abdin Palace in an open carriage, so that the people shall have an opportunity to see him and time enough, as the horses trot by, to cheer him; he arranges that the Queen shall speed to the palace in a closed limousine half an hour later.

As you pass the splendid European palace of Abdin and meditate on the significance of the Egyptian monarchy, you are as likely as not to see passing a few British Tommies. You may even turn to the right in your automobile and, driving through another second-rate shopping and apartment section, find yourself in the Midan-el-Ismailiya, from which you can see the great, ugly, raw structure known as the Kasr-el-Nil barracks, housing a detachment of the British army. Back of you, in the Citadel, you are told there are more soldiers and guns. Out towards Heliopolis, there are army airplanes ready for flight. In many other places you will find little centers of British military operations. Although Egypt is now theoretically "independent," the ultimate basis of authority rests securely on the majesty and might of the Empire. You will learn more about this as time goes on. The situation is intricate, complicated, and anomalous.

II: COLLEGE AT CAIRO

Your automobile has now made a U-turn on Kasr-el-Aini and has stopped before the gates of the American University. You stand beneath the entrance arch of iron-grillwork for a moment as your hand-baggage is being unloaded by the *bowwab* (gate-keeper) and some of the college servants. Directly in front of you is the main building, two stories high, with its dignified and effective Arab facade, facing the street. This used to be the palace of Khairy Pasha, one of the ministers of the late Khedive Ismail. He is said to have kept one of his wives here. The building later on became a cigarette factory, where "Helmar" cigarettes were manufactured. At that time the beautifully ornate entrance hall, marble stairway, and stalactite ceiling were added, which will strike you as you enter the main door directly ahead. After having been used for an Egyptian Government School, this principal edifice of the college was secured for its present use in 1919. It is long, not very wide; contains about thirty rooms, well ventilated and lighted, of which three are

equipped as laboratories (physics, chemistry, and biology), seventeen are lecture and recitation rooms, and the others are the library, study-hall, teachers' room, and administrative offices. To the rear of this building under the library is the cafeteria where all of the three hundred and fifty students lunch at noon every day, and where the fifty dormitory students have their breakfast and supper as well. These dormitory boys live at the Hostel, an attractively fitted up private house about a quarter of a mile down Kasr-el-Aini street to the south, next to the English church.

To the north of this main building is "The Garden" and the athletic field. To the south is the auditorium, the faculty apartments, the offices of the Division of Extension, and the graduate School of Oriental Studies. It is in the recitation rooms of this last department of the university where you will attempt to master colloquial and classical Arabic. Although your own teaching will be in English, you will need to know the real language of the country—a devilishly difficult language, but fascinating in its picturesqueness and expressiveness.

Your work will be chiefly in the college department with students taking what is called the "Arts" course. This consists of four years of high school studies, followed by four years of a college curriculum leading to the bachelor's degree. Parallel to this, through five of the years, runs the "Government" course, taught in Arabic, housed in the same buildings, leading to the Egyptian Government secondary degree.

You will find that most of the students with whom you

have to deal come to the American College from elementary or secondary schools run by the Government. You should know exactly what this means from the standpoint of their educational experience. Two points should be especially noted: the character of classroom instruction, and the relationship between pupil and teacher. No better brief description of the pedagogic vice of the system has ever been given than a report on the results of Secondary School examinations, made some ten years ago, but still very much to the point: The teachers are often "unqualified, ill-paid, and occasionally corrupt"; the sad results of their teaching methods show themselves "in the lack of common sense" of the students, "in the absence of any reasoning power, in the dull, mechanical repetition of memorized facts, in the want of interest and practical intelligence." Added to the fact that the classroom method is largely that of questions and answers on predigested, stereotyped material, "logically" arranged, is this other appalling consideration: that a student's success depends *wholly* on his passing certain final examinations. This means that, along about May, the pupils who are to take the June tests disappear from the schools (and from the "Government" section of the American College as well), and spend the hot spring days memorizing, memorizing, memorizing—"cramming" against the time when they will be asked to tell what facts they have stored up.

A teacher in the government system is not supposed to fraternize with students after the class, nor adopt in class any attitude except that of the rigid disciplinarian. Such is the atmosphere that when an Egyptian teacher im-

bibes a little of the "democratic" method and tries to use it in the teaching of his stereotyped curriculum material, he is apt to be misunderstood and taken advantage of. The instructor does not and cannot count on any interest on the part of the students in what is being studied. He cannot treat a section of his textbook as if it were a "project" for them. Only on rare occasions does he see that gleam of enthusiasm in a boy's eye which denotes the inner drive and the spontaneous readiness to learn. His job is to see that the lesson assigned for the day is mastered, word for word. Again, except in rare cases, it is not considered desirable for teachers to fraternize with students outside of school hours. There seem to be two objections to this: one is that such comradeship as might be developed would tend to nullify the teacher's disciplinary authority in the classroom; the other is that in Egypt it is thought to be dangerous for men and boys to associate too much with each other.

You, as an American teacher, will be called upon to meet, in the classroom, boys who when new to the college know very little of a self-sustained, inwardly controlled, non-imposed order during a recitation period. You will be encouraged to do the very thing not expected of Egyptian teachers: to fraternize with students after school hours, on the athletic field, at the coffeehouse, in your own apartment, in their homes. The questions you will undoubtedly raise, are these: Is it possible to develop a "democratic" spirit in the classroom with those whose habits of response have been built up in an "autocratic" environment? Is it possible to be friendly without thereby incapacitating one's

self for the task of maintaining order? Is it wise to introduce into a student's experience an oasis of democracy or a taste of a freer life when practically all the other situations in which he finds himself will be dominated by a different spirit? If you give students an inch, will they not take a mile? Is not, maybe, their way of doing things better for them than ours, just as ours might be considered better for us than theirs?

You will have to search for the answers to these important queries yourself. Foreigners, with years of experience in the country, have arrived at various conclusions. The son of a missionary, brought up in Egypt, now the responsible head of a large institution there, believes that too much injection of Western democracy is foolish and dangerous. It does not, he maintains, really help the people. Others believe that, intelligently applied, the principle of democracy will work anywhere, and, more important than this, is the only thing which in the end will "work," if you mean by "work" not simply securing outward conformity but inward development. My own conclusion, after three years at the job, is that the real results will belong to those who consistently and constructively attempt to apply the democratic principle.

However, it must be said at this point that an Egyptian boy coming out of a government school into the lower forms of our preparatory "Arts" department would not find the change of spirit and technique severely abrupt. The American College, in its first, second, and third years, is not based on a type of procedure which would be called "experimental" or "progressive" in this country. At the

beginning teaching is by "subject" in a "spoon-fed" way. The greatest difference, therefore, that a newcomer might recognize would be in the quality and attitude of the American teachers. Yet, here again, one must be careful about generalizing. In my three years in Egypt I knew a number of instructors from the United States whose classroom attitude was just as stereotyped and severe as that of the Egyptian teachers.

It is safe to say, nevertheless, that when a student reaches the final year of the preparatory department, and is introduced to a modification of the Dalton system in his biology course, along with other types of latitude given him to work out his own salvation, he finds that he has traveled a long way from the atmosphere which obtains in the fourth year of the government course. As a matter of fact, he may find himself reciting in a classroom next to that in which a section of the fourth year "Government" is working. A supervisor, standing for five minutes at the back of first one room and then the other, would notice a difference which he would not detect as readily were he to compare the first year "Arts" with the first year "Government." The divergence between the Freshman year of the College Department and the fifth year "Government" (its academic parallel) is, correspondingly, even greater. Sufficient is it to say at this point that the atmosphere of the "Arts" section is favorable to the development of a "project" approach; favorable to the progressive liberalizing of the regular curriculum, favorable also to the application of the democratic principle to the work of the department of philosophy, religion, and ethics.

Trips of observation are taken in connection with the courses in biology, botany, zoölogy, geology, etc., trips which, although planned and carried out by the teacher, quickly become "projects" for the students. In all scientific studies there is an emphasis on actual laboratory work, accepted as a commonplace in the United States, not at all common in Egypt. No laboratory work is required in the program of the "Government" course. The teacher gives a few demonstrations, performs a few experiments in the lecture-room, and this is considered sufficient for the educational process. There is no learning-by-doing of a progressive type. The emphasis of the American College in its "Arts" section on pupil-performed experiments is therefore unusual. Not that this laboratory work becomes "project" work for all students, or even for most. It is often simply another task to be done and got through with as quickly as possible. But it at least represents a step in advance of the purely vicarious experimentation of the "Government" scheme. At the time of the taking of the latest census of Egypt the students of economics, sociology, and statistics inspected the processes of compilation in the Department of Finance under the guidance of the instructor. The students of history visit the Egyptian Museum (only a quarter of a mile from the college) in connection with their work, as well as the great monuments of Egyptian antiquity in and around Cairo. The classes in Journalism are given the preparation of the college paper as their "project."

You, who are to be, let us say, a teacher of religion and ethics, will find that not only is the "Arts" curriculum

productive of an atmosphere favorable to experiment, but also that the system of extra-curricular activities, an almost unique contribution of American practice to education in the Near East, affords a training-school for participants in the project process. You may be interested to know that, during my first winter in Egypt, these outside activities were only moderately successful. A faculty advisor had been appointed for each club or group, and it was put up to him very largely to manufacture enthusiasm for the enterprise in hand, and to secure candidates by repeated announcements in assembly, and to "keep the ball a-rolling." This state of affairs was mercifully terminated as the result of a decision to add to the present curriculum the two years above the Junior College Course, and to offer a program leading to a B.A. or a B.S. This made necessary an additional teaching load for all men on the staff. Some of the instructors protested against having to spend valuable time whipping up enthusiasm for lagging extra-curricular activities. Others expressed the feeling that no club should continue unless there were a real demand for it on the part of enough students to make it go by their own efforts. It was voted, therefore, that only those organizations that could show a student-initiated interest and clientele should be carried on the following year. It was further agreed that no faculty member was to feel himself *obligated,* as a part of his teaching load, to assume responsibility in connection with any outside activity; however, it was recommended that, if a group of students were interested enough to get together, make plans, secure adequate membership, and then request the

assistance and supervision of a staff member, the teacher should look upon such an opportunity as a legitimate one, in line with the educational objectives of the college. A short-term instructor was appointed to be in charge of athletics, and to be general overseer for extra-curricular activities. I was appointed to work with him in making the shift to the new basis. Needless to say, the way the matter was decided pleased me greatly, being exactly in tune with my desire to see activities become real "projects."

Two illustrations will suffice to show the kind of thing that happened. The Stamp Club, started by an American enthusiast several years before, had been carried along unenthusiastically as an organization that was, each year, listed in the students' hand-book. It died a natural death under the new régime, and the two or three stamp collectors simply pursued their hobby individually and together as a real enthusiasm, without trying to get any who were not interested to join up because the organization should be supported. I had been in charge of the rather pitiful Glee Club during my first winter in Cairo. Under the new arrangement I waited for something to happen. I let the overseer of outside activities know that I was willing to help if any considerable group would organize themselves. Sure enough, a group met and decided they wanted to do something more pretentious than they had done the year before. I told them how much time it would take to do what they proposed. They agreed that they were willing to spend the necessary hours. As a result, our contribution to the mid-winter show was far superior

to what it had been before, and the whole spirit of rehearsals was changed for the better.

Near Eastern boys do not take to athletics as readily as those in this country, but once they participate satisfactorily they become just as completely motivated from within as our students here. The athletic director was successful in securing a good deal of self-initiated activity. Student responsibility for managing the trips of various teams was relied on heavily. The regular physical training periods for those not trying out for teams were made interesting by the inclusion of simple games, such as indoor baseball, in which all could participate with pleasure.

The literary societies were revised and improved, the two English ones merging and joining forces for several of their major activities. The Arabic literary group worked up an Arabic supplement to the college paper. The Kodak Club continued. The Travel and Nature Study Club organized and carried through a great many interesting trips. An orchestra was formed which found sufficient excuse for its existence in the fact that it was requested to play for student singing in the morning assembly, as well as at the performances of the Dramatic Club. This last-named organization flourished. Egyptian boys take to the stage as readily as any group I know. The spirit of the outside activities has improved since the decision to "democratize" them. Too much can easily be made of this point. An enthusiastic and personally attractive leader can become a sort of "Pied Piper" to a group just as much if he is sought out by them as if he seeks them out. Maybe more so! The set-up of the

system does not in any way guarantee its being carried on democratically. Furthermore, until more experience has been acquired by certain groups new to the whole situation, the director of an activity often has to make decisions for his students. However, enough has been said to indicate that into such an atmosphere there could easily be introduced a problem-project approach to religion and ethics without having to build up a spirit before starting to work, as would probably be the case in a government school.

Yet things were not as free as air! There were rules. Some were based on sad experience. During the first year of the American College's existence, the administration decided to try the principle of the "free gate," that is, allowing the students to come and go as they pleased during the day. It simply did not work. The boys missed their class appointments and study periods, idled in cafés between recitations, and, in general, laughed up their sleeves at the simple-minded Americans and their ideas of freedom. When consulted, the most responsible students agreed that variations on Egyptian customs should be proceeded with slowly and carefully. The "free gate" was abandoned. However, as the college grade years were added to the curriculum, a sliding scale of privileges has been introduced. This seems to work admirably. Our biggest difficulty in affairs like these, as will be undoubtedly recognized, is that we are trying to house three separate schools in the same building: an "Arts" preparatory school, a small "Arts" college, and a government secondary institution. The parents of preparatory and government students object strenuously if we allow too much

"freedom." "Free gate" seemed to Egyptian parents like the most absurd libertarianism. "Arts" college students, however, having grown up in our institution, usually having participated in our program for a number of years, are capable of taking care of themselves. Hence a liberal upper range to the sliding scale. We find that when boys have "caught on" to the way in which we should like to be able to treat them, when they have seen enough of us to understand that we are trying to help them, cooperate with them, rather than set ourselves over against them as disciplinary authorities to make them toe the mark, we have practically no trouble either in class or out. To all intents and purposes, for the choice minority at least, there need be no rules or regulations. But in order that these students should arrive at that highly desirable place it is necessary to "expose" them to the range of our activities and see to it that they are adequately exposed. Coming from homes where the word of the father is law, requiring unquestioning obedience, from schools where the slightest infringement of regulation brings serious penalties, from a more or less well-regimented social situation where each one is obedient to some one above him until you come to the top, our boys were in no position to run themselves, nor are they today when they first come to us. My advice to you, starting in as you will be to view the total *milieu* from the standpoint of character-training, is exactly the advice I tried to give myself for the three years I was in Egypt: face the facts as you find them; then be as democratic as you can in view of those facts, never being content with the measure of democracy attained until complete autonomy and self-direction are secured.

III: THE STUDENTS CHOOSE

A few months after I had arrived in Egypt, the president of the university said he would like to gather together a number of those doing work in religious education in the city of Cairo for an informal conference on professional problems. I encouraged him in this. I knew it would give me an excellent chance to establish relationships with the seasoned workers in the field. I hoped to learn something of the methods that were being used, together with an evaluation of them. Invitations were issued, and the response was unanimous. On a winter's afternoon, representatives from all the leading agencies in Cairo were on hand for tea in the president's office. The American Mission, the British Church Missionary Society, the Young Men's Christian Association, the International Sunday School Association, the American College for Girls, and one or two other educational institutions were represented.

I was asked to outline some of the recent trends and developments in religious education in America, after

which there followed a general discussion on the applicability of these principles to the Egyptian situation. It was found that at least two additional meetings of this group were desired in order to explore more fully the possibilities of a modern approach to the problem of character-building. It was at the third session that the question of the project principle arose specifically. I asked the innocent question: "What projects have actually been planned and carried out under supervision in your institutions?" There was a short pause for recollection; then the following bits of testimony were elicited:

1. The Christian Endeavor Society of the Protestant Church had done some work in street Sunday schools, with the help of the International Sunday School Association. They had also taken an interest in the child welfare work of the American Mission. (The form taken by this "interest" was not very clearly stated.)

2. A member of the group who had formerly been at Assiut at the American Mission College for Boys said that a voluntary group had banded themselves together to help some of the poor boys of the town: they had supplied a few with socks, with their carfare to come from a distance to some function, with fezzes, and with pencils. One student reported that he had "comforted fifteen boys!"

3. At the Church Missionary Society School for Girls in Boulac (a semi-slum district of Cairo), the students, working through a committee, had arranged a Christmas dinner and party for twelve destitute old women of the neighborhood, which was greatly appreciated.

4. Some of the members of the Young Men's Christian Association volunteered their services to help with the running of a club for poor boys in the Boulac section—a club which had been organized by the Church Missionary Society. The complaint was made that the "Y" members did not stick to their job as they should have!

5. A teacher at the American University testified to his attempt to "get a project going" by asking the members of his ethics class each to find a ragamuffin on the street, make friends with him, find out why he was in the position in which he found himself, and then bring back a report to class together with a recommendation of what might be done. It was reported that interest was evinced by only a few in this sort of thing.

6. The president of the American University reported on some village trips organized by a short-term teacher a few years before on a voluntary basis. The instructor took along (in the institution's Ford) three or four students with him on a few casual trips on Sunday mornings. They would select a village, usually near Cairo, drive to it; whereupon the teacher, through an interpreter, would preach a Christian sermon to one group of natives, while one of the Muslim boys would give a health talk to another group. Before the visit was over, most of the students had had a chance to participate in the enterprise. These trips had been discontinued after a few times.

The third discussion session of these workers in religious education closed with expressions of desire to do more to make the curriculum in religion and ethics "life-centered." I realized at once that here was an almost vir-

gin field for experimentation. During the remainder of my first winter (which was chiefly employed in trying to master colloquial Arabic) all I had a chance to do was to teach a discussion-course in ethics and religion for boys in the second form of the preparatory course (from which I learned a great deal about their real problems), to talk with as many well-informed people as I could about things they felt needed to be done, and to steep myself in the atmosphere of the Near East. I decided to try out a project curriculum the following Autumn with the Sophomore class in the college (ages seventeen to nineteen), and gradually extend the operations of the method to other classes if any success with the one group might seem to justify such an extension. Without further preliminary I shall now describe the inception of the process.

At the opening of the college year I found myself assigned to teach an unusually promising group of students in their late teens. There were twelve Egyptian, three Palestinians, two Syrians, two Syrian-Egyptians, one Persian, one Armenian, and one Levantine-American. The Egyptians were of old native stock, as far as could be determined, with practically no admixture of Turkish, Arab, or Syrian blood. The Palestinians and Syrians came from well-to-do families of high social position in their respective countries. By "Syrian-Egyptians" I mean boys born in Egypt, from families naturalized and living in Egypt, but of pure Syrian stock. The "Levantine-American" was an alert youth from a mixed Jewish-Near Eastern stock who had been born in St. Louis, Mo. Twelve of them were Muslim, four were Copts, four Protestants, one

was an Armenian Orthodox, and one a Bahaist. These were boys who had been with the American University for at least a year previously, who had imbibed the spirit of the place, and who were eager to learn. It is interesting to note that English was the only language that all understood well, the Persian, the Armenian, and the Levantine not being familiar enough with real Arabic to do good work in it.

I met with them and spent some time explaining the modern approach to the educational process, and then asked them to mull over the following questions:

"Would you be interested in engaging in an enterprise based on the project principle?

"Is there some other line you would like the class to take?

"What are some of the problems in the field of religion and ethics on which you hope to have some light thrown before the end of the year?

"Name a few projects in which you would care to engage during the year."

In our preliminary conferences, I had described some of the project-work that was being done with young children in the United States, as well as some of the more advanced types of enterprises engaged in. I had then told about the conferences of Cairo religious educators the year before and had described briefly the six types of activity listed by them. The only one of these that seemed to grip them at all was the village-work. They said they wanted to do something like that. They said they did not know much about the villages; they thought the idea of

giving some kind of health-talks was good; they wanted to escape from the routine of classroom instruction which our present pre-professional curriculum largely requires.

Village work! I knew nothing about it. I had spent practically all my early youth in or near large cities. The preparatory school and college I attended were dominated by the country-club idea of rural life. My professional work had been done in Edinburgh, Oxford, New York City. But I had promised my class that they could do anything they wished that was useful and important, and I could not refuse to sanction their choice because of my own lack of experience. The whole affair was to be a real cooperative scheme. Teacher and students together must devise methods, aims, procedures. I told them to talk the thing over with their fathers, and with any one they knew who might help us. I promised, on my own part, to get busy and see what I could find out.

I turned to two men for guidance. The first was Mr. Wendell Cleland, the director of our Division of Extension, whose major objective had been the promotion of public health through lectures, motion pictures, literature, and an experimental child welfare clinic in one of the most needy sections in Cairo. He had been very much interested in the casual village trips made some years before and felt that something of the sort should some day be done by the Division of Extension. I told him of my students' enthusiasm for a piece of rural social service work, and asked him if he would cooperate. He assented gladly, and placed the resources of his department at my disposal.

The second man I consulted was an Egyptian dermatologist, Dr. Fakhry M. Farag, who had worked a good deal for us with the Division of Extension, had given courses of lectures on sex hygiene in our auditorium, and had supervised the medical work of the child welfare clinic. I appeared at his office and told him my story.

"Well," he said, "what is it your students want to do?"

"They want to put on some sort of health campaign in an Egyptian village," I said.

"Do they know anything about village life?"

"No," I said, "they want to find out something about it."

"Have they ever heard of this kind of thing having been done before?"

"Only when a few years ago some of our boys tried it."

"How do they expect to get permission to do this?"

"I don't know."

"What types of things will they specialize on?"

"I don't know."

"What kind of equipment will they be able to secure?"

"I don't know."

The doctor laughed.

"I never saw anything like you Americans. Do you realize what you are in for? You've started a lot of students thinking that all they have to do is to jump into an automobile and ride into a village, lecture to the farmers, and ride away—and that that will do some good!"

"Well," I asked, "what would you say the chances were of doing anything along this line?"

"To tell you the truth," Dr. Fakhry answered, "I have

never thought much about it. But something might be done."

He was silent for a moment.

"Let me think this over a bit, and then we'll have another chat," he said. I bade him good-day. The seed was sown. Three weeks later we made our first trip.

Many things happened in the meantime. Another conference with the doctor revealed the fact that he had professional and personal connections in several towns in the Mudiriya (Province) of Menufiya. He felt that it would be better for us to start where we already had an entering wedge. To get things going in Egypt it is necessary to work "from the top down." He knew Bahgat Bey, the leading landowner of a village called Miniet-il-Arus. The Bey's nephew was the *Omda* (Mayor) of the town. It was suggested that we concentrate our work on this particular hamlet.

The students were informed of these developments as they unfolded. They were told to keep their minds active on the subject of what we could do for the village. Together teacher and boys made a study of the village situation in Egypt as far as it could be picked up from books and reports. The government of the villages was explored. The population of the country, and the percentage living in rural districts, was ascertained. Means of transportation were secured. I purchased a Dodge for this and other purposes. The director of the Extension Division dedicated his Dodge to the cause. The son of a wealthy landowner said he could secure a Ford. The doctor notified the Bey, got permission from the Government (Ministry

of the Interior), agreed to go with us the following Sunday morning. We planned that the initial trip should be one of reconnaissance.

Several other things had to be straightened out before we could proceed. We did not know *exactly* where Miniet-il-Arus was, but we knew its location accurately enough to realize that it would take us about an hour and a half to reach it. If we allowed two hours a visit for our work there, we should have to spend five hours on each trip. Saturday afternoon or Sunday were the only times available. We put it up to the students. They voted for Sunday morning as the best time.

In the college schedule of hours, however, we were allowed only the equivalent of two class periods a week for our work plus another hour or so for "outside preparation." If we made a village trip each week and then spent one class period discussing it and preparing for the next, we would be using at least six hours of each student's time. I really believe that most of the boys would have been willing to do this. However, we felt it was wise to proceed slowly with such a radical departure from past procedures. The Sophomores of former years had spent their hours in class learning various methods for "testing the validity of religious revelation," etc., etc.! Having them actually get out and do something was likely to be viewed as substituting stones for bread, or at least, larking for learning. It was therefore decided to have each student participate in village work only once every three Sundays, not every week, although all village-workers were to meet each week, hear the report of the preced-

ing trip, discuss its implications, and plan for the next. Actual experience at the job every third week was to be supplemented by vicarious experience the other two. The reading and study necessary to the successful completion of the project was, of course, to be done by all.

We hit upon the scheme of dividing the twelve students into three "teams," four to a team. Members of these teams were as follows:

Team I:	*Team II:*	*Team III:*
Fahmi Ghusseini,	Alfred Magar,	Abd al Rahman,
Mohammed Minshawi,	Iskandar Musa,	Adib Onsi,
Mustapha Kamel Husseini,	Nassif Sidhom,	John Tayer,
Adly Abaza.	Mustapha Abd al Aziz Mustapha.	Sobhy Ibrahim.

This grouping was determined by the students themselves. Nuclei were formed on the basis of personal friendship—then the quota of each team was filled up. For instance, Nos. 1 and 3 in Team I wanted to be together in their project work; they invited Nos. 2 and 4 to join them, and the team was complete. The teams, therefore, represented congenial groups. There was no feeling that one team was "better" than another team, as far as I could tell.

It was planned that all those who were to participate in the work should go on the first trip, and that after that the teams would rotate. By voting it was decided that Team III should go the next week, Team II the week following, then Team I, and so on in succession. Thus, over a period of three weeks, each student would participate in the project to the extent of from eight to eleven

hours, depending on the amount of outside work necessary at any particular stage of the experiment.

Another fact that seemed to justify our division of the students into teams was that there was not enough for more than four students to do in the village at any one time, but that four students were kept busy, all participating in the work. If we had tried to take along all twelve boys every week we should have encouraged "spectatoritis" on the part of the majority.

IV: FLIES AND DITCH WATER

The sun dawned bright and clear on the morning of our first trip. The cavalcade of autos started from the university gate at 8:45 in the morning. We picked up the doctor at his home. Prof. Howard Warren, head of the Department of Psychology at Princeton University, was in Egypt at the time. We had invited him to go along with us; so we stopped at Shepheard's Hotel for him. We had the student's Ford (previously mentioned) and the two Dodge five-seaters belonging to the Extension Director and myself. One student only was missing. It was found out later that he had been overcome by "morning lassitude" and had arrived at the university gates shortly after we had left. So, fifteen strong, we started out through Shubra to the north towards the Barrage, one of the great Nile dams. We really did not know what was ahead of us. We did not know what we would find at Miniet-il-Arus, how things would be set up for us, whether or not we could secure a hearing. We really were not sure what subjects we could present, or how

much ground we could cover. It was all more or less a shot in the dark.

We left the Barrage behind. At a little hamlet on the Nile called Bet Yusef (the House of Joseph), one of Bahgat Bey's henchmen stepped out into the road and waved to us to stop. He had been detailed to show us the way; and it was certainly fortunate that he had. A few hundred yards beyond where he jumped upon the running-board of the first car, we were directed to turn to the left, and from then on for half an hour we bumped along over primitive country roads and bridges (never designed for auto traffic), through narrow village lanes crowded with children, geese, chickens, goats, dogs, sheep, camels, and donkeys, beside rich fields of cotton and corn, until we landed at our destination under the trees in front of the Bey's house, beside a muddy *birka* (pond).

In a small entrance compound, with benches all around the inside, except for a gap at the entrance-gate, the Bey had assembled the important men of the town. Some of them were very old, though of course they did not know their exact ages. Some of them were in their thirties. We got out and said "good-day" all round. Then we entered the Bey's home and drank coffee. A remarkable portrait of the Bey's father scowled down at us from a gilt frame.

The doctor then explained our mission, said that we would come next week, if they cared to have us, and give a demonstration which would be very useful to them as citizens. The word for doctor in colloquial Arabic is *hakeem* (the wise one). Having a real "wise man" intro-

duce us was certainly the strategic thing to do. The law of readiness to learn would certainly operate after a favorable mind-set had been secured. For in spite of superstition and prejudice the Oriental has a real respect for what he considers to be erudition. A "doctor" immediately has standing with him.

After being assured that we would be heartily welcomed if we came the next week, we went out into the street and divided into three groups. Some of the villagers took half of the students around the northern section of the town, others took the second half around the southern section. Prof. Warren, the physician, the Extension Director, and I visited the school, met the headmaster and some of the teachers, explained the purpose of our coming. This school is one of the free institutions supported by the government of the Mudiriya. We realized at once that if we could only instruct these students in the elements of healthful living we might do a great deal more for the future of the town than by trying to change the set habits of their elders.

On our way back to the automobiles we noticed a dead dog lying in a pool of stagnant water right between some houses and the corn-shocking compound. We pointed this out as a breeder of disease. (A week later, on our second trip, we looked for the carcass, but it had been removed. The doctor says we must take credit for this bit of sanitary work!) We came, we saw. We saw the babies' faces covered with flies; we saw refuse and manure in the streets; we saw people drinking from the dirty irrigation ditches. But we also saw the tremendous poten-

tialities: the strength of the people, their willingness to be shown new things, the richness of the soil, the cleansing power of the sun, and the untold promise of the schoolboys. We left for Cairo after two hours in the village. We began to see what needed to be done. We began to see how we could begin. We looked forward eagerly to the next week when, with a smaller group of students, we should actually commence our demonstrations.

The students were bursting with sociological questions when the class met to review the first village trip. Is Miniet-il-Arus a typical village? What is its chief support? Is it completely Muslim? If so, why are most of the women allowed to go unveiled? Who actually owns the land surrounding it? Do the people have any share in the government? Is there ever any actual starvation in the village? How is justice administered? If a man had to be put in prison where would they send him? Do the leading men of the town, those dressed in native clothes, ever go to Cairo? etc., etc. I was utterly unable to answer most of these questions offhand. I knew enough colloquial Arabic to have picked up a good deal of information, and to have been able to ask questions, but I did not anticipate such a deluge of queries. We postponed the discussion of most of these until information had been secured, assigned problems to the different individuals, agreed that Team III should start in giving demonstrations, and then turned to the planning of next Sunday's venture.

The doctor had dropped a hint that the Department of Biology and Bacteriology should help us out next time.

The head of the department became very much interested in the possibilities of our experiment. He agreed to lend us some microscopes and to accompany us the following Sunday. Those of the project-students who were working in his department were given the task of preparing some germ-laden water to take along as Exhibit A. This was easily done by soaking a dead frog in a beaker for a few days. A test-tube full of the bacteriologically active liquid thus produced was to accompany us to Miniet-il-Arus. The book, *The Nature of the World and Man,* by sixteen professors at the University of Chicago, had just reached Cairo a little while before; the chapter on bacteria was read and assimilated during the course of the week. Never having had a regular laboratory course in biology, I found it extremely hard work to master the details of the scientific approach in order to be up on the information which was in the possession of my scientific students. The whole thing was a real project for me.

For the account of this second trip, I follow closely the student secretary's report which lies before me in all its detail, accuracy, and linguistic picturesqueness. He says, "We reached our destination at 10:53, and were taken to the home of Bahgat Bey, where all the prominent men of the village were gathered." We stood the three microscopes which we had brought along on the center table of the big parlor and requested the *fellaheen* to sit on the chairs and couches, around the walls, while the doctor explained what we were to do. The job of the student team during this preliminary part was to elucidate to those peasants near them anything in Fakhry's presentation that

they did not understand. Our study of village conditions generally had made it plain to us that the use of dirty water for drinking and washing was one of the principal causes of disease in rural Egypt. It was to the task of demonstrating this that we addressed ourselves.

The doctor lectured colloquially and practically on what science had discovered about the malignant power of invisible organisms. None of the *fellaheen* had ever seen bacteria, as none of them had ever looked through a microscope. However, they had heard something about them; they nodded assent when told of the existence of disease-germs.

Enter our specially prepared water! A slide was produced, a few drops were spread on the slide, and the *fellaheen* were told to look at what water was like when dirty. Our specimen was extremely spectacular. Full fledged paramecia were swimming around in it. The reactions of the farmers were amusing as they squinted into the instrument. One old fellow fairly shouted, *"Ya Salaam! Zaiya samak!"* ("Good heavens! Just like fish!") The doctor and the students then tried to convince them that the water from their irrigation ditches was just as full of germs as that. They accused us of bringing specially prepared liquid to frighten them; they were right!

Nothing daunted, however, we called for a cup of canal-water and a glass of water from the Bey's *turumba* (pump). Upon examination it was found that the canal-water did contain millions of harmful microbes but they were not as active nor as spectacular as those in our spe-

cially prepared water. Therefore there arose a question of professional ethics. We knew that the canal-water was very dirty and full of disease-producing organisms. The people, however, would have thought that, because they could not see as much bacterial activity in it as in our sample, it was relatively harmless. This would have set the whole process back seriously. So we *introduced* a few of our trained beasts into the ditch-water, unknown to them, and they were convinced! I must confess that, in the stilly watches of the night, this sometimes disturbs me.

Nevertheless, the main issue was simple. The water from the pump, examined in the microscope, was relatively clear. The other water was dirty. It was this contrast that we wanted to drive home. Our object was to make them see that if they drank pump-water and refused to drink ditch-water they would avoid one of the main causes of disease in Egypt. The students, during the discussion-period that followed, tried to show this to them by all sorts of methods, supervising their investigations in the microscopes and supplying as much information as the *fellaheen* wished.

They understood all this, but here we struck a snag, entirely unexpected, foreseen not even by the Egyptian students themselves, nor by our Egyptian doctor. The snag was a superstition. One *fellah* warned us that it was very dangerous to drink the clear water! "Dangerous?" we inquired. "How was that?" He maintained that if a man drank pump-water continually he would lose his sexual potency; that if a woman drank it, she would lose her hair! At this there was much nodding of heads.

It was with great difficulty that our physician exploded this notion. Maybe he did not convince all of them. After his refutation, the student-workers mingled with the people and argued the point at some length. The consideration which finally won many of them over was that the progressive men and women in the cities drank nothing but pump-water, and suffered neither loss of power nor hair. They could not very well deny that.

Then one of the religious teachers of the town stepped up to have his look. He felt that he must show off his learning, since the *effendis* (modern young men) were exhibiting theirs, so he quoted from the *Quran*: "For every life there is a period written. It can neither be hurried up nor delayed." Then he expounded, "Therefore, O your Excellency the Doctor, it is all folly for you to say that these little animals can kill a man. If the man's time has come to die, he will die. If not, he will live." To this remark, there were murmurs of approval from the elders who were listening intently, for they were all Muslims. What would this *hakeem* have to say to the holy *Quran?*

The doctor realized that he must turn the tables on the old fellow, or else the morning's lesson would be wasted. "O my brother," he said, addressing the *sheikh,* "you have studied all the learning of the holy books and the traditions; and you are a wise man. So will you please tell me what you do when you are on the railway track and hear the engine whistle? Do you continue walking on the track or get off?"

"It is well known," answered the flattered *sheikh,* "that

any intelligent man will get off the track or else he will be killed."

"You answer discreetly, O teacher, for you do not believe that it is written in Paradise that you are to die by that engine, and so you do not defy it but wisely let it pass. Now, simply imagine that these microbes are like the engine, able to kill you if you do not keep out of their way; and believing that your fate is not to die by them, you carefully avoid them."

Our biologist then showed the group some specimens of typhoid germs stained on slides. The students explained these to them. We wound up our demonstration by a concluding speech of gratitude for their coffee, hospitality, and attention, to which was appended a straightforward appeal that those who heard the scientific truth about their water-supply should constitute themselves the teachers of the village and lead their fellows to a knowledge of how to keep well.

Then we packed up our equipment and bumped back to the main road, more cognizant than ever of the difficulties that lay ahead.

That week the class period was extremely interesting. A report from Team III was read and elucidated. All sorts of eager questions were asked by the members of other teams who had not shared in the experience. The discussion centered on the difficulties in the way of getting the scientific truth accepted and acted upon. The superstition about loss of sexual potency was taken up.

The class agreed that this was nonsense. How did they know? Had they ever heard of any controlled experi-

ments being made that disproved the notion? No, but they had studied what was involved in the production of sex energy, and none of the great students of the subject had mentioned clear water as having any effect one way or another. Then the matter of superstition as a barrier to true thinking was raised, not only in this particular case, but in other cases. Does any member of the class believe in superstitions? No. Does any one believe in the "evil eye"? (The superstition of the "evil eye" in Egypt is simply the belief that some people have a malignant power over others which expresses itself in glances given, and effects unfavorable changes in others' prosperity and fortune.) Yes, some of them of course believed in the "evil eye." One boy had seen it work; a baby had shriveled up and died under its influence. Did any one believe in *afareet* and *djinn* (evil spirits)? Yes, some did. Most did not. What kind of universe is this we are living in anyway? Is it in the control of various forces working at cross-purposes? No, there is only God and the Devil as the real agents behind everything. Aw! there is no Devil—that's a superstition. Some people even say that belief in a personal God is a superstition. And yet some of the world's keenest thinkers believe in a God who can be conceived of as in some real sense personal or superpersonal. The discussion certainly waked the group up to the practical bearing of religious belief on education.

The subsidiary point about fate and determination, raised in connection with the village *sheikh's* quotation from the *Quran,* was discussed later, and in other classes where the incident became known. The so-called "fatal-

ism of Islam" is a real thing. It dictates moral *laissez-faire*-ness. It impedes the progress of scientific thinking and living in the Orient, as it does wherever it exists. It is used as a rationalization for laziness. Why bother about something that might be changed for the better when *Allah* knows his job so well? *"Huwa'arif shughlu"* ("He knows his business")—this is a common expression in Arabic. However, when one moves out of the realm where people have been emotionally conditioned and faces some practical job to be done where *control* can obviously be established, this much vaunted fatalism fades away. The project-students all agreed that whether things are metaphysically determined in the universe or not, we have to *live* creatively. Experience is on the side of the possibility of changing things, within limits. A certain amount of determinism makes it possible to effect these changes. Laws must be reliable in order to be used. It is at this point that the work of the department of philosophy, religion, and ethics must be done foundationally in the laboratories of science. The project at Miniet-il-Arus brought this whole problem into sharp relief. The science teachers used it as material for their work.

One student-worker reported that a farmer had told him that he did not care for the flat taste of the pump-water as well as for the more interesting taste of the ditch-water! This was briefly discussed. In certain cases it was agreed that what was healthful was sometimes not as intriguing as what was not. The thing was largely a matter of habit, in the case of the drinking-water. But the difficulty had to be kept in mind.

As far as we could tell, the experiment was furnishing the students with many new and rich experiences, stimulating their minds in all sorts of unforeseen ways and determining a brimful curriculum of worth-while elements without the slightest necessity to "sell" anything to them, or to "put over" any subject matter on them, or to "get them to become interested" in anything in which I was interested.

Another decision was arrived at: that we should next try to give demonstrations at the school to the boys. It was felt that their habits of thinking would not yet have settled into paths hedged about by religious and superstitious fences. A seed sown now might bear fruit later. It proved subsequently a thrilling experience to see the way in which these simple *fellah* school children took in the demonstrations. To them, seeing was believing. I could not help thinking of Huxley's injunction, "Sit down before the facts as a little child."

It will be sufficient to summarize the next five trips. We started, as planned, with the school, demonstrated there the difference between dirty water and clean water, and requested the pupils to write essays in Arabic on what they saw. The school authorities were very generous with us in the matter of time, simply turning over the classes to us as long as we cared to work. The student-workers took charge of the microscopes, and explained what could be seen on the slides to each pupil, all one hundred and twenty of whom had an opportunity to look. On the following week, we took with us printed copies of a paper on water which the doctor had prepared in view of the

conditions we found in the village. One of the students gave a lecture on it. We then distributed large numbers to the villagers with the injunction that its content be explained to every home. "Spread the news" was our slogan. One new thing was done. A fly's leg was shown under the microscope to prove its bacteria-carrying ability. This paved the way for our work on flies the following week. Here again one farmer was amazed at what he saw in the instrument. He said it was as big as the leg of a camel, and much more hairy.

Right here should be noted what a keen interest the natives took in the snapshots we had made for our work. We arranged it so that, in one way or another, every important man in the town had a picture of himself in some group or alone. These photographs will probably prove to be among the most cherished possessions of the people. If nothing else recalls our work I am sure they will. The first act of our weekly ritual on subsequent trips was the distribution of pictures. We endeavored not to disappoint any of those who legitimately might expect to be given one. If we found we had missed out, we made our promise to bring more later a cause for increased anticipation of our return.

It was at this time that we learned that Sheikh Mustapha, the village *imam* (religious leader) was giving talks on the subject of our visits, on Fridays, in the mosque after prayer. This made possible a wider audience for our message than we could reach ourselves. A paper on flies was prepared. This, together with the one on water helped to hold these Friday presentations down to

facts. The *sheikh* himself made the somewhat extreme statement that since our visits had begun, nearly every one in the village was trying to drink only pump-water.

On the fifth trip the students answered questions about our work and gave lectures on fly life, how many times the fly eats and excretes, its anatomy, its ability to transport germs to faces and food. Methods of preventing flies from giving babies disease were outlined. *"Nish id dibban"* ("Shoo the fly") was another slogan suggested for use throughout the town. Here again, the author found himself under the necessity of studying up on things that had never come into his immediate experience before. He became, in a modest way, an authority on the anatomy and deviltry of the insect under consideration.

One interesting thing was our discovery that the essays we requested the students to write on their own, were all practically the same, and composed in faultless classical Arabic! I have them before me as I write. They are beautiful to behold. It evidently happened that the headmaster wanted us to get a good impression of the ability of his boys. He might have done it in a more subtle way than dictation. Variety would have been not only the spice of life but the indication of independence.

Our seventh trip was given over to the inspection of living conditions in the town. Of course, they were appalling. The ventilation of the houses was poor, the rooms small and dirty, animals omnipresent, insects in abundance. Nevertheless we found that much of the work done at home was accomplished on the housetops in the sun. Our doctor once remarked in this connection,

"Without the continual sunshine most of these people would be dead."

Universally, we met with courtesy, hospitality, and good humor. The doctor came away one Sunday morning without his breakfast. He intimated this to one of the *fellaheen* in a casual way, when he arrived at Miniet-il-Arus. Nothing was said, but the peasant immediately disappeared only to reappear in fifteen minutes bringing with him a tray on which were three cakes of native bread and thirteen eggs!

On a Sunday in the middle of December we made our last trip for that year. We decided to return once more to the village four weeks later, to check up on the results of our efforts.

January 16th dawned bright and fair. We had had our Christmas and New Year's festivities. We had had many new experiences. Our trips to Miniet-il-Arus seemed to belong to the activities of a finished year. But we knew that we could not let the matter rest where it was. So off we sped, teachers and all three teams, again fifteen strong, along the old familiar roads, over the well-known bumps and bridges, with the smell of the country-dust in our nostrils and the breath of the brisk winter air on our cheeks.

We gathered the crowd together in the enclosure under the tree beside the *birka* for a last consultation. This, though the villagers knew it not, was to be in the nature of an oral examination. Many amusing things happened. One old farmer swore that he had told all his relatives not to drink or wash in the water from the irrigation

canals. At that moment there passed a maiden with a water-pot on her head, bound for the biggest ditch. The doctor stopped her and explained to her that the water from the pumps was far superior to that from the ditches for both internal and external use. He wanted the old fellow to tell her this himself. Everyone began to snigger. She was his niece! We then asked him why she was disobeying his explicit instructions. Not to be caught, he stoutly maintained that she was absent the day he gave his relatives the lectures. A roar of laughter greeted his remark.

The village grocer was questioned very closely about his shop. He had been lectured by the students one month before on the subject of flies. It had been suggested that he put a cloth over his wares. He now volunteered the encouraging information that he had secured large glass covers for his goods, which permitted his customers to inspect what he had, but which shut out the flies.

The *omda* had prepared for us a list of the pumps in the town, together with the names of their owners. There proved to be only fifty-seven in a village of twenty-five hundred. We urged that those who were fortunate enough to possess them should share their use with the neighbors. Whether this suggestion had any effect or not, we do not know.

Our most encouraging encounter was with the schoolboys. It was just closing-time of the morning-session (11:30 A. M.) when we arrived; so the headmaster formed them as a drill squad and allowed us to examine them.

One by one a number of them stepped forward and told their experiences in helping the villagers obey our advice. It seemed true that if the rural towns of Egypt are to be saved from many of their unfortunate practices, little children will have to lead them. In some cases we found that adults whom the boys met had tried to tell them that our talk was simply *Kalam farigh* ("buncombe"), but the students had stuck to their guns because they had seen things with their own eyes. We heard another gratifying thing: the teachers in the school had used our papers on flies and water as the basis for many a lesson in reading and writing. If such an impression could be made over a period of eleven weeks, it would not seem impossible for the Government to accomplish great things by systematic health education in all the schools for a period of years.

V. THINKING IT OVER

I shall now attempt to describe the way in which the weekly hour in the classroom was tied up with, or geared in with, the project that was being carried forward on the field. In one sense, the project began and ended in the classroom. The discussion of what enterprise should be attempted was carried on there. The final evaluation of the whole was made there. Of course, the classroom might just have well been the library of my apartment, or the meeting-place of a young men's club. The atmosphere of informality was preserved throughout. The seats were movable and could be arranged to suit the business in hand. There was a large standing notice-board at one side of the room where relevant clippings, pictures, charts, and posters could be displayed. One of the chief advantages of the place for our purpose was the splendid blackboard, which was used every time the group met for the graphic representation of the topics under discussion. The lighting was excellent, and the ceiling extremely high, as in most Near Eastern buildings. The door of the room

led directly into the garden, which enabled us to meet for part of the time in conference session, and then go out on some trip or excursion in the middle of a period without disturbing any of the other classes. Time and again the flexibility thus made possible proved of great value.

Necessarily one of my first jobs was to expose the students to the possibilities of the method that was to be tried out. I believe that there should be worked out in detail a philosophy of "exposure" and its place in the project-process. Some of my own convictions on the subject will come out as we proceed. Many of the analogies used to suggest its function are too simple to be adequate. "Priming the pump," "setting the ball a-rolling," and kindred expressions hint at the problem but do not carry us far. A homely illustration, however, supplies us with a germinal idea. A housewife recently told me of her difficulty in planning a varied menu for her home if she simply went out to the kitchen after breakfast and talked the matter over with the cook. Sometimes nothing palatable, appetizing, or new would suggest itself. But, if she went to market, and actually saw with her own eyes the many things that could be secured and tastily prepared, she never lacked suggestions. When she "exposed" herself to a variety of possibilities, her own creativity was stimulated. Thus, the more one knows about what has been, is being, or might be done in a given field, the more is one likely to prove really creative in a new situation. It was with all this in mind that I approached the inception of the project-process in Cairo.

I spent the first class period telling about some of the

enterprises which had been undertaken in America from the educational point of view: the building of an aeroplane by a group of boys during the course of which they learned a great deal about mathematics, physics, chemistry, economics, and even law; the zoning map prepared by pupils for a certain city commission, and the learnings which flowed from it; various projects of helpfulness at special seasons of the year, and so forth. I gave them time to ask questions, and tried to make sure that they understood the basic realities of the illustrations.

We employed the second class period in an attempt to get at the reasons why this newer type of method was being advocated. It turned out to be a Socratic dialogue on educational psychology. The laws of learning were stated without being, for the moment, named. The factors of interest, satisfaction, and closeness to experience were stressed. The students seemed to grasp these conceptions quickly. At the end of the hour I came back to illustrations of projects that had been carried on, writing on the board the six examples which grew out of our series of conferences with local workers in the field of religious education. I urged them, on the basis of the "exposure" thus far, to think hard about the whole process before the next class session, and come back ready to answer these questions: Would the group be interested in engaging in an enterprise based on the project-principle? Or is there some other line you would like the class to take? If you incline towards tackling some sort of project, what suggestions have you to offer as to the specific project we might undertake?

Be it noted that at this point I, the teacher, had been in Egypt less than a year at the time of these discussions. I had been studying the language and absorbing the atmosphere as quickly as possible, but I was very inexperienced, at least as far as the Near Eastern *milieu* was concerned. I had to rely on the students to help with the development of the process, for I had no way of knowing in advance what they would care to do, or how they would do it, or whether or not they would accomplish anything. For this reason, I consider this Egyptian attempt to work out practically the implications of modern educational theory learned in New York City as a real test of the project-principle, with the teacher the co-worker in *fact*.

At the next class session, there was practical unanimity that some type of village work should be undertaken. They did want to try the method. Of all the enterprises I had suggested, the rural trips gripped them most. I was under no illusions as to why this was. The students undoubtedly wanted to escape from the routine of classroom instruction which our present pre-professional curriculum largely requires. But they also shared with me and with each other the conviction that the villages were the "real Egypt," the "backbone of the country"; and they maintained they wished to gain some first-hand experience of them. Their motives were mixed, but in the mixture somewhere there was the desire to do something on their own, to pioneer, to see if they could affect the life of a town by means of a health campaign, and so forth.

Having definitely decided on some sort of rural work,

I turned to the two men mentioned before for guidance: the director of the Division of Extension, and the dermatologist. The practical results of the consultations have been described, as far as getting help with our enterprise was concerned. The resources which they represented were also available for our classroom work. There was, in the first place, a great advantage in working in cooperation with the Division of Extension. The director had made his chief concern an appraisal of public health activity in Egypt, dominated by the conviction that the extension work of the university should center in the main on this. As far as the need was concerned, this cause was the most clamorous. Widespread suffering and inefficiency due to preventable disease cried aloud for attention. Through the agency of the Division of Extension, the ladies of the faculty circle had started and were maintaining a child welfare clinic in the Sayeda Zenab district. Through the medium of public lectures and the distribution of literature, the Extension Division was shaping up its program to do a constructive piece of public hygiene education, always avoiding duplication of the work of other agencies. The director had been interested in the former village trips of students and teachers. He was keenly enthusiastic about our venture. He placed the resources of the Division at our disposal in various ways. He gave us two lectures in the classroom on the results of his investigations into the problem of population and infant mortality. These were given before we started our trips, as background preparation. The statistics collected freshly by the Division of Extension were not available

in any one place, so we accepted his summaries as source material.

In the second place, we brought the doctor into the classroom to discuss the prevalent diseases of the people with whom we were to work. From his intimate clinical experience, he was able to inform us about causes, symptoms, and cures for the scourges which are the occasion of so much suffering in rural communities. In some detail, he discussed *trachoma* and *bilharzia*. After the first trip we checked up to see how far our observation had been sharpened by his exposition. This proved a good example of the use of the expert in the democratic process. At every step of the way, our enterprise was kept close to facts and to scientific methods by our medical advisor.

In the third place, the department of biology cooperated with us helpfully, and the leading teacher came into the classroom to explain the nature of various bacteria, to show us stained slides, and to help us with the use of microscopes, which, as has been pointed out, helped us so noticeably in our demonstrations.

In the fourth place, I found it necessary at certain points to give brief talks on sociological matters, to fill in the background for our work. All these more systematic presentations were made as the need for them was definitely recognized by the students. The interest in the lectures bore out directly the analysis of their relation to group thinking in Chap. X of Prof. Elliott's *The Process of Group Thinking*.

As to reading, and its relation to the project and the classroom work connected therewith, there was none abso-

lutely required. This was partly because of the nature of the work, partly because of the limitation of time, partly also because of the theory on which our enterprise was planned. All the students did some reading, some did a great deal. The bibliographies given were more in the nature of suggestive background material than of direct help on the conduct of the project. I have before me as I write a complete list of all the books in the university library on sociology, ethics, and religion. I have no means of knowing how much browsing was done by the students in these fields. I do know that a good deal of time was given to the following books:

Blackmar, *The Elements of Sociology.*
Davis, and others, *Introduction to Sociology.*
———*Readings in Sociology.*
Carr-Saunders, *The Population Problem.*
Eddy, *Religion and Social Justice.*
Edman, *Human Traits and their Social Significance.*
Ely, *Outlines of Economics.*
Gamble, *Peking: a Social Survey.*
Johnson, *Constantinople To-day: a Pathfinder Survey of Constantinople.*
Ross, *Social Psychology.*
Wallas, *The Great Society*
Snedden, *Educational Sociology for Beginners.*

There was recently published an anthropological study, profusely illustrated, attractively written, and easily grasped, which would have been invaluable for our purposes had it been available a few months earlier. It was

used later on for other purposes. It is, *The Fellahin of Upper Egypt* by Winifred L. Blackman. It is a *Middletown* of village life in the Nile valley. It is the best thing in print on the subject of mores, rites, superstitions; and is almost as applicable to conditions in the Delta as to those in Upper Egypt.

Reading was not stressed. Our library was inadequate, but time for reading was still more limited. And it was definitely felt that there would be more value in the practical information actually relevant to the life of Egypt that could be picked up in concentration upon the project itself than in absorbing the conclusions of western sociologists.

Certain books on hygiene were constantly referred to, particularly the textbook of the regular course in the preparatory department. The chapter on bacteria in *The Nature of the World and Man* by sixteen professors in the University of Chicago, was used to great advantage in the classroom. In the interests of economy of time, the gist of certain books was presented to the class: Margaret Sanger's *Pivot of Civilization* on birth control; Harry F. Ward's *New Social Order* for certain programs of social reform; Bertrand Russell's *Proposed Roads to Freedom* to the same end; Paul Bousfield's *Sex and Civilization* for an extreme statement of the place of woman in society, utterly at variance with Near Eastern conceptions, and very stimulating; *The Fruit of the Family Tree* by A. E. Wiggam and *Behaviorism* by John B. Watson, on, respectively, the extreme hereditarian and the extreme environmentalist side of the nature-nurture controversy. Here again, these summaries were given when the need

arose in connection with fundamental issues that were raised by observation of the social structure of Egyptian life. The classroom sessions were often used to explore these basic issues. The nature of this exploration will now be described.

At the meeting of the class following the first excursion into the country, the students were bubbling over with queries. Some of them had never been to a village for a real tour of inspection. Some had never actually talked to the peasants of their own country in any other than a commanding manner with the master-man relationship assumed. They testified enthusiastically to the pleasure of the experience of being welcomed and entertained by the people. Rural courtesy and hospitality were universally commended. But the questions raised by the trip took precedence over everything else.

What proportion of the people live in the country and what proportion in towns and cities? From the researches of the Division of Extension (figures largely derived from the Census of 1928) the answer was given: slightly over 14,500,000 people in the country as a whole; over 11,000,000 live on the land, 4,000,000 do all the agricultural work necessary. It was discovered in connection with one of the biggest problems facing Egypt, the modernization of her agricultural machinery, that if the productivity of the Egyptian farmer could be augmented by the introduction of modern equipment to a degree comparable to that which obtains in the United States, the production which now requires four million workers could be equalled by two hundred thousand! It is easy to under-

stand, therefore, that unless modernization proceeds with a great deal of caution, the social dislocation which will inevitably follow may leave the country in a far more unfortunate position than at present.

Is there a great pressure of population upon food supply in Egypt? The students were interested in this question. Compared with India, the answer is "no"; but danger threatens. The high infant mortality, as well as the high adult death-rate, keeps the population from becoming great enough to cause widespread starvation. But a great deal is being planned in the immediate future to promote child welfare and public health which may change these conditions, reducing the death-rate. It is hence easy to see that without a corresponding decrease in the number of children born the problem of food supply may soon be acute. This was discussed at some length. Fortunately, only one or two students took the position that the population of the country should be allowed to increase far beyond what it is today, though all testified that they had more or less assumed that, as Adam Smith said long ago, the best test of the prosperity of a country is the increase in the number of its inhabitants. It was at this point that birth control was taken up. The opinions of Margaret Sanger, Cox, Carr-Saunders, and other students of the problem were thrown into the discussion. We considered the opposition of men like Mussolini to the idea. The interview of a member of our staff with the Minister of Public Health was described, in which the Egyptian official had stated emphatically that birth control was anathema to him, and that he hoped to see Egypt

become a nation of thirty millions as soon as possible. This started a veritable storm of controversy. Needless to say, we came back to the problem time after time throughout the year. It was recognized by all the students as one of the biggest issues before the nation. A few extreme nationalists in the class favored a large and growing population, because Egypt then would be enabled to make an increasing threat against the tyranny of the British. When we focussed our attention, however, on the effect of a high birth-rate on individual families (including their own, in the future) every one was willing to admit that to bring into the world only those children who could be adequately provided for, and to whom could be guaranteed some real opportunity for development, was a desirable policy. The effect of a long series of pregnancies on the women of the nation was not mentioned by the students, and, when thrown into the discussion by the teacher, was not considered a particularly significant point!

But the position of women in the world proved a fascinating subject for exploration, and came up in a perfectly natural way. After the first trip, and again after some of the others, the freedom of even the Mohammedan women in the village of Miniet-il-Arus was noted. It was remarked that the vast majority wore no regular veil—that they only held up the side-strips of their headdresses as veils when we passed by, that they chatted freely with the men, that they worked side by side with men in the fields, that they were to be seen sitting in groups on the streets, and so forth. Why was this? Various answers were given by members of the group.

Most of them agreed that the intimacy, *camaraderie,* and closeness to the soil of the village life broke down artificial barriers between people. But, the inevitable question arose: is the segregation of women simply "artificial"; is it merely a custom, or is there something in the nature of men and women which makes it desirable? The group was divided, but they all agreed they would like to use part of the class time discussing this question on the basis of whatever facts could be gathered. In this connection I brought to bear the opinions of Paul Bousfield, Havelock Ellis, John Langdon-Davies, Edward L. Thorndike, and others on the problem. The objections of the conservative Muslims in the group largely centered about the sex difficulty. Men and women could not be trusted together. Well, how about in Europe and America? That's different. Why? Because the social conditions are different. Then it isn't so much a matter of inherent nature as of social customs and traditions? Maybe; the women of Europe and America are better educated than ours. Then if Egyptian women were educated there would be less need for segregation? Yes. Well, how about the women in the villages? they are not better educated than those in the cities and yet they seem to have more freedom; why is this? If one is brought up to have companionship with women, it may be all right. Is it a matter, then, of experience and training? Yes. Is it desirable? Yes, in most cases. What can one do about it? An individual can resolve to allow his own wife and daughters more freedom than his mother and sisters have had. Thus ran our conversation. We came back to it

later when we took up the social aspects of the sex problem. I believe that on this point the effect of the classroom discussion was more striking than on any other. Such revelatory remarks as, "I had never thought about it in that way before," "I really didn't know that," "I see it now as I never saw it before," were frequent. No attempt definitely to "sell" the idea of treating women as human beings was made. When they asked me about the most forward-looking American attitude on the subject, I explained it to them as best I could. Most of the group finally read Herbert Gray's *Men, Women, and God,* and were very much taken with the attractiveness of the picture there presented of a marriage based on frankness, respect, and love.

VI: FOLLOWING THROUGH

As a result of our trips, some of the students were bothered for the first time about the problem of poverty, and the questions it raises about the organization of human life. Three or four classroom sessions were devoted to the topic. The villagers were poor. None was starving, but most were prevented from having the very things which seemed to make life worth while for the students. The local landowner, whose estates surrounded the village, was a comparatively well-to-do man who spent most of the time in Cairo. The peasants worked for him. It was well known that on some of the estates conditions were little better than slavery. A few *pashas* were reputed to pay their peasants no regular wages at all, but to count on their stealing enough to live on. Absolute ownership prevails in many parts of the country, the actual management of the cotton plantations being in the hands of *wakils* or agents. The social structure is pyramidal, one per cent (roughly) of the people owning two-thirds of the land, securing large incomes, and often spending their

lives in laziness and luxury. At the bottom is the peasant, practically attached to the land, unable to read or write, at the mercy of the particular *wakil* who happens to be in charge of the estate on which he toils. In between are small landholders (and there are many), mechanics, artisans, clerks, government employees, professional men in varying stages of prosperity.

Suddenly, some of our students caught a glimpse of society as an organism, potentially at least. One of them cried out in class, "Why should there be rich and poor?" Others asked many questions. What right have the propertied classes to their property? Why are some people given an education and others not? Why are inequalities allowed to persist? We talked about various social programs which had been suggested. The news from Russia took on a new significance. A visiting professor at the time gave a vitriolic lecture in a public hall in Cairo in which he denounced the entire Soviet system. This was discussed. The programs of the Socialists, the British Labor Party, the Cooperatives, were analyzed. Most of the students were extremely conservative economically, even though for a while they were willing to protest against certain obvious injustices in the capitalistic system. One of the keenest of them never tired of arguing, following along the line taken by A. E. Wiggam in *The Fruit of the Family Tree,* that the poor are, for the most part, poor because they are born incompetent, and (this he thought his strongest point) are far happier if left alone in a humble station than if educated beyond their level, and tantalized by the hope of becoming what they

do not have it in them to become. There were a number of other members of the group who repeatedly challenged this attitude. The position of the environmentalists was discussed at length. All agreed that society ideally should be organized so as to allow every one to develop whatever talents he possessed.

But just here a fundamental issue was raised. What is the aim of the governmental system of education that is being introduced into the towns of Egypt? So often in the past, the type of "white collar" training received in the state schools has made the recipients dissatisfied with life on the farms, and has flooded the cities with clerks. Egypt is an agricultural country. The prosperity of the land is absolutely dependent on the crops. If the prevailing type of secondary (and even primary) education tends to accelerate the drift to the cities by making boys who have grown up on the soil dissatisfied with their lot, should it be encouraged at all? Would it not be far better to leave the vast mass of the people uneducated, if this insured contentment? Is it better to be literate and unhappy or illiterate and happy? Are there not now many more clerks than the country can possibly employ? If the drift to the cities is bound to bring about an unemployment crisis, why should men not remain on the farms, and be encouraged to do so by the Government? Or why could not a more practical curriculum for the rural schools be devised, different from the type of training that leads to professional life? These, and other queries of the same type, were raised by our visits to the little school at the village. We did not attempt to answer them with any

finality, but rather to indicate clearly what the country was up against educationally, and refer to the various ways advocated of solving the difficulties. A course in the philosophy of education was offered for those senior students who wished to make a semester's study of the situation.

We talked for a while about the genesis of superstitions, how they sometimes were based on striking experiences interpreted as connected with something happening coincidentally, how they were handed on from friend to friend, from father to son, and how they eventually secured almost universal acceptance. The students agreed that in the realm of cause and effect in nature the best method for arriving at the truth was by controlled experiments. One of the teachers had stressed this point in an assembly talk by showing how Galileo refused to accept the hearsay which Aristotle had perpetuated as the truth about falling bodies. He used a controlled experiment to explode a misconception.

We agreed that it was a really worth while inquiry to study how the universe does act, how things can be controlled, how life and thought can be improved by learning how to use laws. In a sense, this was considered the organizing center of a modern curriculum, involving science, the arts, the social sciences, and all the elements of a well-rounded program. In the contemporary pursuit of the means for improving human life, all agreed that such conceptions as evil spirits, ghosts, goblins, charms, had proved useless, and often harmful. In the village health campaign it was pointed out that our success

would not depend so much on converting the peasants to the details of some therapeutic measure as on gently, subtly, but nevertheless really changing their point of view. Some one then said that if this were the case, work with the children of the school we visited might have more far-reaching effects than any endeavor with the grown-ups. As has already been told, the schoolboys thereafter claimed a good deal of our attention.

Another point in connection with our second trip was considered in class. You may remember how one old peasant had quoted the *Quran* to the effect that every one was bound to die some day, that the time of one's death was appointed beforehand, and that nothing could be done to affect this foreordination. The practical effect of this in relation to our campaign was to breed indifference to controllable conditions of health, and leave the issues of life and death, well-being and disease, to fate. So I told the story about the agnostic who criticized a seventeenth-century Puritan for carrying his gun when he went out of his house. "If you won't die until your time has come, why go about armed?" questioned the scoffer. But the Puritan replied, "Maybe some Indian's time has come."

At its worst fatalism paralyzes all efforts at reform and improvement, allows people to sink down into the established ruts of convention and prejudice, and to depend upon luck for the meeting of emergencies. At a less insidious level, it prompts such remarks as, "You cannot rush the East," "Rome was not built in a day," "You must move slowly and surely"; all of which may

conceivably be true in a given situation, but which is much more apt to be a rationalization of laziness. The students believed in the modifiability of the conditions of life. They agreed that whether things are metaphysically determined or not, we must live as if we were free. We cannot but choose, and we feel that the experience of choice is real. Things can be changed, within limits. Even the Puritan became an active agent where his own protection was involved. The *fellaheen* accepted the doctor's example about getting off the track when the train was coming. Why not avoid germs which the experience of men shows to be harmful? Why not obey laws of health which experience shows to be beneficial? There seems to have been absolute unanimity in this matter. Is it too much to believe that students who have been subjected to our educational processes will turn out less fatalistic and more intent upon changing things for the better than those who have not? We have as yet no way of measuring this accurately. We can get an inkling of what is happening only from the testimony of our graduates, and from an observation of the quality of their citizenship.

I think enough has been said to show how opportunities were seized upon to capitalize for the classroom work interests aroused by the village experience. Various teaching methods were used: lecture, question-and-answer, discussion. Sometimes I knew the answers to the questions I asked; often I did not. Sometimes I knew the answers to the questions the students asked; often I did not. My practice was to allow them to open up some relevant topic and to ask them questions only when they were missing

some more important point than the one under immediate consideration. Some of the time in class was taken up with a review of the progress of the project during the past week, and preparation for its continuance. After our work in the village was over, the class periods were used to consolidate and interpret the results of the process. Written testimony on the whole procedure was secured from each student. The following are some typical samples in the boys' own words:

John Tayer, Levantine-American (inclined to look down on the Egyptians): "The village work has really impressed me greatly. The most stimulating effect that stirred up my nerves was the general life conditions. Generally speaking, it is the life which I was looking for and I really never thought that a beautiful country such as Egypt would have farmers who would live like animals and beasts. . . . It seems to me as if those farmers represent the dirtiest kind of life that ever existed and exists in the world. . . .

"Our personal work, however, was of a great influence upon our lives. This kind of research social work was of extreme importance to add to our experiences. But, on the other hand, I am sorry to say that those Egyptians (villagers and others) can never improve their social life. . . . They do the thing they hear merely to please the speaker but as soon as he goes they go back to their old fashions and ways of behavior. After so much work I have carried back with me these few words, 'An Egyptian cannot improve himself unless beaten or ruled by a foreign nation and obliged to do a certain thing.' "

Fahmy Ghusseini, a wealthy Palestinian boy: "No doubt our visit to the village gave us several advantages. The first thing is that we got some knowledge by being in contact with the doctor and the teachers of our college. Secondly, we saw the real life of Egypt. Because the *fellaheen* are the majority of Egyptians, they represent the nation. I never imagined how poor they were until I visited the village. I used to imagine that Egypt will take its place among civilized countries in a score of years. But after visiting the village I realized that it takes Egypt a hundred years at least to uplift this nation into the standard of Europeans. However, I have noticed one interesting thing, and that is if you explain to them something is danger they try to avoid the causes and ask the means for avoiding it. They are a simple-minded people, kind and generous."

Adib Onsi, a Persian pre-medical student: "I was very much impressed by the results of our village-work; especially among the children of the school. When the doctor asked them questions they used to answer him correctly. But I can't believe they are practicing to tell their parents what they heard about dirty water and flies. Children are sometimes like parrots who repeat all they have heard without getting the real meaning. Except, if the teachers (of the village school) begin to explain all that we have said and approve it they may become as means for the spread of these ideas among the villagers. With regard to the old men I do not believe that up to now they approve. . . . As a famous proverb has it: 'Studying in youth is a drawing on stone which will remain permanent,

but in old (age) is as a drawing on H_2O which is momentary.' "

Mustapha Abd el Aziz, an Egyptian boy: "The students of the American University with the help of the professors, visited the town of Miniet-il-Arus, which became very soon clean and well developed. At the last trip when we visited this town, we noticed that the *fellaheen* began to know the difference between canal water and pump water, especially after they have seen these two kinds of water under the microscope and (have heard the) medical speeches by the doctor. . . . The small boys had a great share in learning. . . . The women also are pressed by their husbands not to get canal water. It seemed to me that the *Omda* of this village is trying to help the people."

Adly Abaza, an Egyptian, said he had learned the following things from the project: "(a) I have learned more details about flies, their way of eating and digesting, its own food. (b) The superstition of drinking dirty water thinking it is useful to their bodies from the sexual point of view, and good for the women's hair. (c) Some of the *fellaheen* are able to understand what has been explained to them. (d) If this activity is done by the government or by societies, of course, it will help very much."

Alfred Magar, a Syrian-Egyptian, says that he learned about the difference between city and country life, the necessity of repairing the roads, cleaning up the towns, draining off stagnant water; he learned, "the reason why the *fellaheen* think that dirty water is better than clean"; he saw some of the plants of Egypt which he "had not

seen growing before"; he discovered the unusual generosity of the peasants, and that, in the country, "the women work just as the men do."

Iskander Musa, an Egyptian, says that the *fellaheen* told him that if a baby is kept clean an evil spirit will dwell in him, will be attracted to him because of the "evil eye." They said that since dirt had not affected their fathers and grandfathers they saw no reason for getting exercised over it. "They are generous and obedient. They are polite with us" although they use much *shateema* (swearing) with each other. "It is a matter of fact that every one of my dear professors and fellow students agree with me that working in the village to help the *fellah* is the first patriotic help we can offer to Egypt. . . . Personally, I began to spread this thought among my own acquaintances."

Nassif Sidhom, an Egyptian, said that he had learned, in connection with the trips, some biology he had not studied in his science classes. (Let us hope it was correct!) He affirms it to be the first patriotic duty of an Egyptian to help the *fellaheen.*

Abd el Rahman Kamel, a dark-skinned boy from Upper Egypt, said he believed the project to be "a very good starting and very interesting and my attitude to the *fellaheen* is that I should like to carry on and give them some more."

Several subsidiary projects grew out of the village work. Each week the trip was written up and the account published in the *A.U.C. Review,* in order that all the students could keep in touch with what was going on. The

dean of the College requested the class to take charge of the assembly periods for three successive mornings, planning worship services and presentations of our activity. This was done. The Student Press Club (which takes charge of all articles on student life sent to the Cairo newspapers) had two of its members prepare accounts of the work with the help of the project-workers, to be published in the leading journals of the city. They were sent out in English to *The Egyptian Gazette* and the *Egyptian Mail,* in French to *La Bourse* and *La Liberté,* and in Arabic to *Al Abram, Al Moquattam, Al Siyasa,* etc. The articles were published without an exception, and the editorial comment was extremely favorable.

I was asked by the administration to write a popular account of the work. It was published as *An Experiment Project in Village Health Work* and sent to all those interested in the doings of the university. At a conference of educators from all over the Near East in Constantinople, project education was discussed and a request made for any reports of experiments that had actually been conducted. None were forthcoming except the account of ours, presented by our representative at the conference, who had taken enough copies along to supply each member of the conferring group with one. It was urged that more projects, adapted to the Near East, be actually written up and spread abroad as stimulators to further activity.

The project enlisted the cooperation of two out of three of the then active departments of the university: the College and the Division of Extension. Most of our teachers

were interested enough to ask to be allowed to come along on some of the trips. The work was used as material for discussion and essay in other courses: biology, chemistry, English, contemporary civilization. On account of my connection with the work, I was asked to give a lecture on "The Egyptian Village from an Outsider's Point of View" to a group of teachers and leaders in the College auditorium. After this presentation, there came in to me a number of requests for suggestions as to how this type of work could be done in local centers in the Delta.

VII: THE UNDERLYING IDEA

Space does not permit me to describe in detail the many other applications of the project-principle to our social ethics work in Cairo. I shall, however, refer to three or four. The major enterprise of the winter following the one during which we engaged in village work, was the preparation of a social service directory. At a good many points in our discussion of conditions in Egypt and especially those in the capital city, we were balked by the lack of information about what was being done to improve things. There was no central bureau for the various charities. Workers in an institution or settlement or clinic on one street would not know of the existence of similar work near by. We realized that some day a real sociological survey of Cairo should be made. We had already studied the pathfinder surveys of Constantinople and Peking, referred to in our reading list above. We had made a rough comparison of Cleveland, Ohio, and Cairo, on the basis of materials put out by the Cleveland Wel-

fare Federation. Both cities were approximately a million in population. But a thousand times more was known about the American city than about the Egyptian one. The students asked: "Why shouldn't we make a survey of the social service agencies of our city, and discuss the implications of the work being done?"

So we began. The project grew. It finally became a rather extensive pamphlet, which we called "Helping Humanity." It was translated into Arabic and French. Almost seven thousand copies were distributed. The newspapers carried reviews of it.

Our sources of information were many and varied: maps, the telephone book, the city directory, the public health bureau, and incomplete lists of child welfare activities published by various committees. But the chief method of finding things out had to be by visits. The students divided into teams, and, armed with carefully prepared schedules of questions to ask and information to get, spent hours and hours learning things about Cairo.

A few interesting discussions took place as a direct result of students' reports about institutions. Here are some samples:

Two Muslim boys went to inspect a Christian missionary hospital, whose staff is united in a desire to proselytize. On the wall they saw a motto: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be healed." They complained bitterly about this on their return. This, they said, was an attempt to capitalize the credulity of the simple-minded in the interest of evangelism. A heated discussion followed.

A Catholic home for foundlings was seen to be divided

into two sections, carefully separated one from the other, one for boys, the other for girls. Even babies of different sexes were not allowed to mingle. A discussion followed on the attitudes of various groups on sex, and the whole philosophy and psychology of asceticism.

A home for waifs and strays was found to be rather dirty and dilapidated, though adequately enough equipped for health and activity. One investigator complained that the institution did not hold up a very high standard of sanitation to those it was trying to help. Others maintained that it was following a wise policy in not tantalizing the poor boys with experiences of comforts which never afterwards could be theirs. Other institutions were criticized as being far too clean and luxurious to effect any changes in the behavior of the temporary inmates.

A project of teaching the college servants was suggested to me by two things: one, the obvious desirability that those who receive written messages at the gate for students or members of the faculty should be able to read what is written on the envelopes; the other, the memory of work of this kind done by the undergraduates at Princeton with Italians of the town and the foreign helpers in the university dining-halls. A query about the feasibility of such an enterprise met with an enthusiastic response on the part of the Sophomore class. It was listed at the beginning of the year as a possibility. Later it was voted on as one of the activities to be carried on during the second semester.

In discussing project-education with the Senior students

during the first semester, and giving the Sophomore list of possibilities as illustrations, an interesting thing happened. The Seniors (three in number) decided they would like to engage in the teaching project. They felt it would sharpen up considerably their study of the philosophy of education. I had not originally thought of extending the project-curriculum into the Junior and Senior years, as the students seemed to want to do library research on certain problems. However, I saw immediately the advantage of having one advanced class engaged in an ongoing activity as the determining factor in its program of studies. Naturally, I encouraged the students in their plans.

One day we got the college servants together and asked them if they would care to study, provided the time could be arranged satisfactorily with the superintendent of the grounds and buildings. Their precipitous assent was amusing. Certainly they would like to learn! The idea of sitting as students in classrooms which it was their duty to take care of pleased them. Some of them may have thought that it would mean getting out of work. Of course, the administration was rightly firm on the point that, lessons or no lessons, the regular work of the servants must be done. Most of them were inspired by a real desire to become literate, to be able to unlock the treasures of reading to themselves and their families, and (to get back to one of the two original stimulators of the scheme) to be able to comprehend the significance of the writing on envelopes, packages, papers and announcements which they dealt with in the course of their work. Furthermore,

in Egypt a servant who can read and write commands a higher wage than one who cannot.

This last point caused a discussion in the Senior class immediately, paralleled by one among the faculty. Will teaching the college servants how to read and write make them dissatisfied with their lot? Will it make them want to climb out of the servant class, put on European clothes, and become clerks? Will it tantalize some of them with a vision they can never hope to realize? Will it lead them to ask for higher wages?

The institution did not prove itself unduly conservative and "stand-pat" in dealing with these questions. The general feeling was that the project should proceed, since there was a manifest desire for it on the part of the servants, on the part of the students on whom the teaching burden would fall, and on the part of those who would supervise: the director of the newly formed Department of Education (now dean of the College), and myself. But we all felt that a straight answer ought to be given to any questions of the type just listed which really indicated a desire to see the servants helped rather than hindered. In one form or another, these queries are bound to arise in the minds of those who live and work in the Near East. They were frankly discussed by the Seniors. The dangers were immediately recognized. The present Egyptian Government educational program, originally designed to train civil servants, often turns out "educated" men who have, by their experiences, been made unwilling (or unfit) to go back to the country and engage in agriculture, and for whom no clerical positions can be found in

a land whose cities are overloaded with "white-collar" men. The Seniors did not want to start something similar with the servants. The decision was, however, this: that ability to read and write, if taught in the proper way, should simply be a help to these men in doing their own jobs more efficiently, and in giving them a richer contact with life. The Seniors felt that plain literacy was a basic *right* of all men—*and women*. They believed that the chances of upsetting the social system (at this point, economically, a caste system) were nil, and that the future benefits to the individuals concerned far outweighed the theoretical objections.

The undergraduates took the initiative in sizing up the situation, selecting the textbooks, dividing their pupils into three classes according to their knowledge and ability, supervising their homework, and giving individual coaching and tutoring during odd hours. Let me quote from one of the student reports on the results of this work:

"The idea of teaching the servants is splendid. When we started it, I had fifteen in my class. After sounding them out I found that six of them did not know the alphabet, so I had to send them to Edmund Abd Al Nur who is directing the very elementary work in the Arabic language. Three of the remaining ones could not conveniently come at the hours of the class. The first was the Dean's chauffeur, the second the servant at the canteen, who has to sell fruit and cakes on the campus after school is over, and the third works in the kitchen. They regret exceedingly not to be able to come, and they have

asked me several times to change the hour of the class, but this has proved impossible. Therefore I now have six regular students.

"On the whole, I was greatly moved by the attitude of these servants. They put their whole heart and soul into their learning. They worked diligently between recitations. I feel a great sympathy for them, and I hope that they will be served in the best way possible. Up to now I find that interest is sustained in them very well; I cannot prophesy for the future. However, I am sure that what is needed is not only their interest in the work, but the constant interest of those who teach them. The teachers should use a variety of methods—not become bored. I hope that more organizations will spring up from such an experiment; that other institutions will adopt this plan. I feel that through this a great service may be rendered to our country, to humanity, and to God."

Other student teachers reported the same feeling of interest in the work. Teachers were changed every two months to give more students a chance to benefit by the scheme.

Other projects were carried through, such as an entertainment and game evening for the poor boys of a club in the slums; investigation of the conditions among working boys; a study of the hours and wages of those engaged in building our new auditorium; the staging of a memorial service for Zaghlul Pasha to which the Wafdist members of Parliament and Madame Zaghlul came.

These enterprises were selected by no new techniques.

The more ambitious of them were service projects: students of one social class doing something *for* (even though *with*) members of less privileged classes. The time available for these activities was not enough for social work. The only possible justification for describing what was done is that it was pioneer work, carried on by a teacher and undergraduates as an adventure together. It was the first thing of its kind in Eygpt. As has been reported, a few projects had been engaged in before, but they had never been used as a basis for the exploring of the facts and meanings of modern life. It is hoped, therefore, that the foregoing pages, together with this present analytical chapter, will help just at the point where many people feel a need: in the practical working out of principles already agreed upon.

Let me say a brief word about the teacher's own mindset. I went to Egypt fresh from my graduate work at Teachers College and Union Theological Seminary. I thoroughly believed in democracy, not only as a form of political organization but as a technique of social progress, even as a way of living. I knew that the tenor of Levantine life would be inimical, at many points, to the democratic principle. I knew that my task, therefore, must be one of compromise, adjustment, adaptation. But I tried, deliberately, to keep on the lookout for opportunities to move ahead. At times I would be betrayed into acting autocratically; at other times I would be tempted to rationalize my failure to help the students think for themselves. At rare moments, I would almost be ready to listen to the counsels of despair voiced by certain members of the com-

munity, and plunge ahead on a program that I had worked out in advance, and which I felt I could *make* "interesting." This might have satisfied certain people, looking on from the outside, better than the steady attempt to apply the project idea. But I was dedicated to the proposition that the project-principle should be given a fair trial.

Our program, therefore, turned out to be primarily learning by doing, rather than learning by studying what others were doing, or had done, or thought should be done. In getting things accomplished, there were, as the reader has seen, a great many avenues of investigation and exploration opened up. It was not all "doing," but most of it was related to the doing. Following Prof. Kilpatrick's classic discussion of the project method,* the central emphasis was on "whole-hearted, purposeful activity, proceeding in a social environment." In each case, something was pro-jected, imagined, envisioned in advance, and then worked at. Each unit of activity, as well as most class sessions, fitted into the program of carrying something out. The purposiveness and whole-heartedness of the process *meant* something slightly different to each undergraduate. Some were less eager, wide-awake, alive, and enterprising than others. But many of them worked overtime. Some made real sacrifices to keep forging ahead. They reported their interest to their families and friends. They spoke about their enterprises in the daily assembly with enthusiasm. Some of their written testimony has been

* *The Project Method,* W. H. Kilpatrick, Teachers College Bulletin, Tenth Series, No. 3, October 12, 1918.

given. In class, I sensed an *esprit de corps* which I attributed in part to their interest in having their schemes succeed.

In the pamphlet just quoted, Prof. Kilpatrick says: "The purposeful act is the typical unit of the worthy life. Not that all purposes are good, but that the worthy life consists of purposive activity and not mere drifting. We scorn the man who passively accepts what 'fate' or mere chance brings to him. We admire the man who is master of his fate, who with deliberate regard for a total situation forms clear and far-reaching purposes, who plans and executes with nice care the purposes so formed. A man who habitually so regulates his life with reference to worthy social aims meets at once the demands for practical efficiency and of moral responsibility. Such a one presents the ideal of democratic citizenship. It is equally true that the purposeful act is not the unit of life for the serf or the slave. These poor unfortunates must in the interest of the overmastering system be habituated to act with a minimum of their own purposing and with a maximum of servile acceptance of others' purposes. In important matters they merely follow plans handed down to them from above, and execute these according to prescribed directions. For them another carries responsibility and upon the results of their labor another passes judgment. No such plan as that here advocated would produce the kind of docility required for their hopeless fate. But it is a democracy which we contemplate and with which we are here concerned."

Notice the first point made: that purposive activity is

the characteristic mode of the good life. The worth-while individual does not drift. He does not leave things to fate or chance. Choosing, planning, executing, and evaluating important enterprises absorb his time and energy. This is not to be interpreted as meaning a life of feverish activity, or mere "busyness," but it implies a positive attitude on the part of a citizen. One is even tempted to feel that any kind of activity is better than the passive resignation which characterizes much of Eastern life. A complex of factors promotes inertia: climate, custom, creed. The desire to be up to date is increasing, though its manifestations are not always in the interests of real social progress; in general, however, the *form* of life is taken for granted. What has been thought and done is taught to the next generation as that which should be thought and done. In the face of this, an educational technique which promotes "whole-hearted, purposeful *activity*" seems desirable.

"Activity" as such is no necessarily worthy goal. Nor is even "whole-hearted, purposeful activity." The projects of the Cairo dope-ring are to a very high degree whole-hearted and purposeful. Prof. Kilpatrick's caution, "not all purposes are good," is therefore needed. Life must be regulated with reference to "worthy social aims." This supplies the criterion and norm. It is training in the formation and execution of socially useful purposes that must be the end of character education. This at once helps to determine both method and content, both ultimate ideals and next steps. The major enterprises carried on in Cairo were responses to the call of extremely simple and elemental needs, even though the working out of the impli-

cations of the responses was complicated and difficult. Disease, poverty, and ignorance as patent defects in social life made a direct appeal to the students. Much as one might hesitate to endorse certain ways of curing these defects, he would not hesitate to approve the desire to cure them. Hence it worked out to the advantage of our scheme that the activities selected seemed easily defensible as expressive of worthy social aims. This may not have given the students as useful training as the attempt to think through and carry out activities involving more subtle and complex purposes. But it will be understood from the description of the classroom methods used, that although the projects themselves were simple to the point of superficiality, the avenues of investigation opened by them and pursued carefully were anything but simple. For example, the benefit to the college servants of teaching them to read and write was obvious; but the discussion, opened up as a natural consequence of the whole question of what education is really useful for the underprivileged classes in Egypt was anything but simple, and the answer anything but obvious. I am willing to defend, therefore, my approval of the particular projects selected on the ground that they were merely parts of a process the total effect of which was not to oversimplify the problems of socialized living but to promote understanding of the issues involved.

VIII: LOOKING BACK

One of the main drives for motivating purposeful activity is the belief in the possibility of effecting changes for the better in things as they are. The typical fatalist is cynical about this. He is apt to allow things to happen as they may, to remain in well-worn tracks of habit and convention. His philosophy seems to inhibit the operation of those very forces necessary to secure the project type of activity. The man who, though not a fatalist, is nevertheless an agnostic as to the workings of human nature, who regards the actions of individuals as for the most part essentially capricious, is also a poor agent for securing social change. Again, the person who believes that men always have acted and always will act only with a view to their own immediate (or ultimate) advantage falls in the same category. The Levant is full of people who exhibit these tendencies to a greater or a lesser degree.

But if the existence of these types creates a problem for the introduction of an educational process based on the project-principle, it is equally true that the method *par*

excellence of breaking up these ways of thinking lies in that very process. Here is a special case of learning by doing. If one, drawn out of his habitual modes of thought and behavior by his interest in an enterprise under way, sees changes taking place, sees school children mastering health lessons, or teaches servants who actually learn quickly, his own experience of the possibilities of improving things in time will affect his philosophy. Of course, it is possible that the failure to accomplish something planned in some extraordinarily difficult field of social endeavor may only strengthen his cynicism. Reality often offers stubborn resistance to change. A fumbling technique, a narrow approach, or an unresourceful and unconscientious application of a principle may result in complete failure. Faith that there must be a way out if the conditions are discovered and fulfilled is difficult to maintain. Often such a faith is hedged about by so many "ifs" that it becomes nothing but a pious and anæmic hope. But when all this has been said, one of the best ways to break up skepticism in regard to the possibility of changing things is by furnishing actual practice in changing them. It can be done to a certain extent by exposing individuals to accounts of the way in which things have been changed in the past and are being changed now. In matters of social control, however, first-hand experience seems best. It may well be supplemented by vivid descriptions of important movements of which the projects actually carried out give hints, especially as to meanings and techniques. In the writer's own recent experience, an experimental dealing with unem-

ployment in New York City on a small scale threw a veritable searchlight on the problem in the large, and statistics and methods were for the first time illumined in all their vividness. The hand-to-hand struggle with a real problem, none the less real because definitely restricted, gave a clue to the understanding of the problem on a national scale. Ideally, the project-principle, intelligently applied, should affect the experience in the ever-widening areas. It ought to lead on and out. It should form a real "training for maturity," which does not insist on children's solving adult problems by adult methods, but which does insist on their fighting real battles and facing real situations in such a way as to promote growth in skill and insight.

A word about Prof. Kilpatrick's reference to education for a democracy. Egypt is far from being a democracy. But the type of students with whom we were dealing had a great deal of the kind of freedom which we covet for every one in a democratic society. They were largely drawn from the privileged classes. They will be able to choose their life-work, and even, though to a lesser degree, their life-partners. Thus, since a life of active purposing was to be potentially feasible for them, it was felt that the function of our college, and especially of our department, was to provide them with an opportunity to develop the skill in and the desire for the purposeful life. The second part of Prof. Kilpatrick's paragraph, concerning the life of the serf or the slave, would not apply to any of them; but it would apply in some measure to the peasants. The decisions that affect the greater portion of the farmers' lives in Egypt are made for them. At the moment, there-

fore, an elaborate program of project education for the villagers is not being considered. I feel that the process could be applied in the village schools to the great improvement of agricultural technique, but that is another matter. One other point should be mentioned: the students who tasted the pleasure of self-initiated, purposeful activity as a part of their education, with the corresponding recognition of their privileged free position in society, were encouraged to study the comparative serfdom of the life of the peasant. The inequality of opportunity in their country struck the undergraduates with great force. They had always known about it, but for the most part they had accepted it as more or less in the nature of things. We feel that the projects in which they engaged stimulated that divine discontent which is the spur to reform, and increased their understanding of the pyramidal structure of Near Eastern society.

The village work enterprise began as an attempt to help the *fellaheen* solve their health problems. It was not primarily an attempt to face the students' own hygienic problem. To that extent it was one jump removed from the actual living experience of the undergraduates. Of course, it did have implications which affected their own health attitudes. The fly problem, for instance, is not confined to the villages. But the second-hand quality of the work needs to be borne in mind. Comparing this with the health project described by Collings,* we find that the latter started with something that happened to two

* Collings, Ellsworth: *An Experiment with a Project Curriculum*, 1923, Macmillan, pp. 54-68.

members of the class itself. Mary and Johnnie Smith came down with typhoid. The subsequent investigation of the Smith home and the report to Mr. Smith about the causes of disease was something like the investigation and report to the villagers in Egypt. But the Missouri experiment utilized the pupils' own community as the field and finally succeeded in bringing the majority of that community in on the enterprise. Although in Cairo the newspapers broadcast the story of the village work, subsidiary projects grew out of it, and people wrote in to get help on techniques, there never was achieved quite the same wide-spread concern in the outcome as where students and community were equally affected by what was done.

It was unfortunate that the projects in Cairo were selected, for the most part, by the rather informal method that has been described. I used the only technique that seemed readily available at the time: consulting with as many people as possible who had had experience in education, finding out all I could about what had been done, describing these things to the students, and then working out a "check list" with them from which the enterprises actually carried on were selected. If I were doing it again, I would use some sort of reasonably thorough survey technique.

Another criticism has to do with the set-up of a project curriculum in the midst of a more or less hard and fast subject-matter schedule. Each project lacked thoroughness on this account. Only relatively small amounts of time could be given to them each week, so that they had to

spread out over months for anything at all to happen. Something has already been said about the atmosphere of the college being favorable to an experiment with the project-principle, and this was very true. But time and time again, the students, hot upon the trail of some interesting result, had to be wrenched from what they were doing and brought back to the university in time for their next class. Some of our undertakings were so ambitious that they really should have had more time than it was possible to devote to them. The Rollins College schedule (three two-hour periods a day devoted to three subjects each for five days a week) would make possible a far more thorough piece of work than could have been attempted with our piecemeal program. We did the best we could with the time at our disposal, but a good case could be made out against our using it the way we did.

Again, no valid method for testing the results of our work was devised or used. Certainly with so many tests available, some adaptations of them could be worked out for use in Egypt, which, even though not completely satisfactory, would be a step ahead of the ways in which we evaluated our work.

I cannot say that I have observed changes in character which are undeniably attributable to participation in the project-process. I sensed an increased sensitivity to social phenomena on the part of a few students. I believe that many were stimulated to launch forth into new activities. This, and a number of other unscientific guesses, plus the verbal and written testimony of the students, would lead me to believe that the whole thing was worth doing. As

a result of personal counselling with certain problem boys, I believe I could be definite in describing actual changes in habit and outlook that took place as a result of interviews. But to be equally sure that genuinely vital things happened as a result of the projects is impossible.

But I believe that our program had its strong points. I would defend the project method because it plays fair with the accumulating testimony of educational psychology, and because it socializes the entire notion of individual development. I believe it recognizes the laws of learning as no other method does. I also believe it holds out more hope for the adequate training of citizens than any other way. But the defense I would make at the close of this little book is very specific. It has to do with the actual enterprises engaged in.

In the first place, the students felt that what they were doing was worth while—that it accomplished something both for others and for themselves. This was true especially of the three major projects: the village work, the preparation of the social service directory, and the teaching of the college servants; but it was also true of the minor as well. This feeling on the part of the boys was strengthened by the conviction of the faculty that the time spent on the projects was well invested. Even the most erudite research scholar on the staff, whose conservatism in education is proverbial, gave his approval to the program of the department when he studied what was actually being attempted. This might not have been conclusive had not those with whom and for whom the enterprise

were carried on added their emphatic appreciation. The villagers repeatedly said they believed in the trips of the students. The heads of the social service agencies commended those who prepared the directory. The servants who were given lessons in Arabic and English were fulsome in their appreciation. The editors of the newspapers commented on what was being done and recommended that other agencies take the hint. All this is in sharp contrast to some of the project-processes employed in the name of religious education. Many of the enterprises carried on seem trivial; the activities appear unimportant. Some are institutionally ingrowing, some merely pleasant ways of spending the time. I am convinced that the sustained interest in our program at Cairo was partly due to the fact that the students believed in the enterprises as socially useful.

In the second place, the project approach was used with more mature students (college Sophomores for the main experimental course) than in other institutions where it has been tried. This meant that somewhat more worthwhile jobs could be undertaken than if one were dealing only with students of the lower grades. But this was not all. From a study of missionary literature, I have discovered that, although the project-principle is being introduced for such things as vocational training in village schools, the educational approach to courses in ethics and religion in institutions of higher learning is mainly from the standpoint of mastering subject material. The kind of formal courses in religion, even in social ethics, sociology, and so forth, which are generally offered, are subject-

matter-centered to an extreme degree. Projects for the welfare of men are talked about in class. Movements are discussed. "Basic principles" are learned. The teachings of Christ are studied with a view to their social application. Examinations on the "ground covered" are given at the end of each semester.

Now some of this undoubtedly is living and vital. In some situations, a good systematic course for alert students who want to know what is going on in the realm of socially progressive thinking and activity covers more ground and gets more accomplished than a project-course, as such. But the Near East is full of chit-chat about life. It is the easiest place in the world to start a discussion—even on vital topics raised by the students themselves. And the danger is that there will be talk and no action, dreaming and no doing. Dr. Hartshorne has recently warned us about putting too much reliance on talk in trying to change character. There is a subtle temptation in even the best discussion course in the Near East. A teacher is apt to come away from a lively exchange of conflicting opinion on some matter of vital import, feeling that he is really getting down to business with his students. And this is actually the case often enough to lure him into believing it to be truer than it is. Then he meets the argument that by college age the students are ready for serious discussion in class, and it is a shame to rob them of the opportunity to come to grips with the ever-present issues of life and death by taking them off on trips and letting them work outside of class. And so the average boy in a mission institution is confined all day and

every day to the recitation room and the laboratory. What desultory "social service" he does is carried out either after school hours or during vacation.

However, our experiment in Cairo was based on the conviction that *doing* should be central, even for boys as mature as college undergraduates. We felt that the solution of problems met in doing something offered a more realistic training than those, however important, divorced from immediate experience. We did not have resources or staff to carry this out completely at every level of our curriculum. But we tried to experiment enough to indicate the range of possibilities for a program based on the project-principle.

Lastly, the scheme we tried out was, as far as possible, an Egyptian scheme, in the sense that the activities involved in it were at every step of the way determined by the locale. As has been seen, very little help as to detail was furnished by project-processes in other lands. The three major enterprises carried on were specifically designed to meet needs which, though undoubtedly found in other places, were peculiarly pressing in Cairo and the vicinity. The discussion of religion, of religious customs, of superstition, of the place of women, of poverty, and the thousand and one other topics which inevitably suggested themselves, all grew out of the Near Eastern *milieu*. As teacher, I wish to testify that, just as I was unaware of the implications of some of the projects we undertook, I was often unaware of what would happen next in a discussion. I was perforce one of the group in thinking as well as activity. The whole process was an

adventure for me. My students knew this. Our comradeship in endeavor was all the more genuine for it.

Our project work was not a thing by itself. It geared in with our total program, which included: lectures by visiting professors on religious and social subjects, daily assemblies, Sunday services (for the dormitory students), personal interviews for every boy based on the results of a character-rating system, and so forth. It relied heavily for its success on the personal relationships between faculty and undergraduate body built up by former teachers and carried on with deliberate intent. It was helped along by our extra-curricular activities, which brought staff and students together for creative accomplishment. Personally, I tried to develop my contacts with the boys at as many natural points as possible: as teacher, director of assembly, coach of the tennis team and glee club, organizer of the system of personal interviews, supervisor of social activities in the dormitory. To me as a teacher, all these ways of playing and working with the students afforded opportunities for learning to understand them. Our project work together was thus not an activity apart. It was only one of the educational opportunities presented. But it was one of the most important, most rewarding. That is why I wished to write about new learning in old Egypt.

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